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**An Essay
on
the Symbolic Process**

Charles Douglas Levin

**A Thesis
in
The Faculty
of
Arts and Science**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

April 1989

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ABSTRACT

An Essay on the Symbolic Process

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Concordia University, 1989

Psychoanalytic theory and contemporary infant research suggest the existence of areas of experience whose understanding will probably lead us beyond conventional linguistic and social scientific approaches to the problem of meaning. In its current usage, the noun 'psyche' serves as a collective term for semantic phenomena of this sort. The psyche is really an increment of the symbolic process; and the symbolic process may be understood as an emergent property of the interplay of a variety of psychobiological functions and psychological capacities in the context of body, object, and interpersonal relations. The fundamental perceptual, cognitive, affective, and interpersonal conditions of the symbolic process are discussed in the thesis, and explicated in the context of a critical examination of philosophical and social scientific models of language and psychological development, with particular reference to the ideas of Freud, Piaget, Melanie Klein, Lacan, Winnicott, and Habermas.

*

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I dedicate this piece of work to the members of my immediate family: Gillian and Henry, who are very precious to me; and to Jacqueline, whose generosity and devotion to my father have always been inspiring to me.

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PREFACE

The following are some considerations on the problem of the "symbolic process" which I hope will be of interest to researchers, teachers, and theorists who are looking for different ways of thinking about the problem of meaning. I make no pretense of offering anything that could be put directly to practical use in any particular field, especially clinical psychoanalysis.

The concept of the "symbolic process" suggests a kind of epistemological grey zone, where nobody really knows what is going on. One reason for this-- the least important, in my estimation-- is that it opens up a field of inquiry virtually unprotected by the safeguards of an established conventional diction. This is regrettable, but I do not think it is an insuperable barrier to useful discussion.

The reader will discover that I have made little use of the various terminological recommendations and taxonomical distinctions which have emerged during the last century in the fields of logic and language. All the reader needs to know in order to get through my argument is that when I use words with the root '-symbol-', and when I claim something about 'meaning' or the 'semantic', I am not particularly concerned with issues that lie within the purview of linguistics or semiology. For the phenomena proper to those disciplines, I have reserved the terms 'sign' and 'signification'. Beyond that, the differences between an

'icon' and an 'indexical symbol', or between an 'image' and an 'archetype', for example-- all of which are real enough and certainly important-- will count for relatively little in what I have to say.

The Greek from which the term 'symbol' derives is rich in suggestion: the verb symballein meant 'to throw or bring together,' and the noun symbolon referred to the two halves, perhaps of a pottery inscription, broken and shared between friends on parting. Arvanitakis (1987) has pointed out that this etymological ancestry implies a conception of 'meaning' which draws on the idea of an internalized object relationship.

A symbol generally implies a link, a relationship, or a bond between something and something else; but beyond this connotation, my use of the word will probably seem deviant. Like 'nature,' the term 'symbolic' has come to be associated with the congealed and the invariant: the form and the permanence of laws (Lacan 1964, 20); talk about symbols tends to signify a fixed pattern or expression. In the academic world, symbols are thought to have 'structures', or to embody 'structuralizations' and 'concretizations' of something (Atwood & Stolorow 1984, 85ff.). In this sense, we might say that the ego, the superego, and the id are complex "representations" of the unconscious "structure" of personality organization. But this view of meanings as perseverative objectifications or realizations touches only one side of a very difficult question. What we call from

one point of view a concretization is from another an abstraction.

Dreaming is a good example. Freud (1900) certainly talked about universal dream "symbols," but only as an afterthought in later editions of that work; his emphasis was on the dynamic, processual quality of the dream, and he warned against styles of interpretation which treat the dream too much as a completed object. He assumed that when the dream was dreamt, the 'dream thoughts' were moving about more or less crazily, and described the remembered results as a narrative "secondary revision" which, fortunately, usually fails to seal over completely the underlying activity. It is true that dreams can and do become like permanent records, with standard motifs and recognizable styles; but it is probably useful to try to think of them as brief glimpses of a multifactorial process rather than as texts with a hidden meaning. I have adopted the same approach to the problem of the symbolic in general.

As for the rather inexact vocabulary of 'symbolic process,' 'symbolization', 'meaning', 'semantic', and so on, the justification for my usage, such as it is, will have to emerge as the discussion unfolds. In some respects, it may be related to the arguments of the sociologist Baudrillard (1981), who contrasts "symbolic exchange" with "semiolinguistic communication;" the same quarrel between sign and symbol, classic and roman 7, has found a useful historical overview in Todorov's (. 77) discussion. My

perspective also has some affinities with Kristeva (1984). Unfortunately, I am not sufficiently in agreement with Kristeva to justify adopting her terminology. She uses the term 'Symbolic' where I would speak of secondary process ("thetic") 'signification,' and she describes the pre- or proto-linguistic infantile body as 'Semiotic' when I would have preferred to write in terms of 'symbolic process.'

Kristeva's choice of the term Semiotic to designate the pre-linguistic dimension of psychosomatic functioning has provided the occasion for some critical comment (White 1977), as I am sure will my own terminology. She seems to have had in mind a notion of the "material" as opposed to the "superstructural" or "ideological" aspects of social formation. While I have found this kind of distinction more trouble than it is worth, I do think that Kristeva's emphasis on the "semiotic materials"-- the corporeality of the thinking process-- is important. Another reason why she may have chosen the term 'Semiotic' is that Saussure once defined linguistics as a branch of semiology-- a classification which would support Kristeva's contention that the linguistic function is a development of the Semiotic function. (In this regard, it is also interesting to consider Locke's original use of the term 'Semiotic' in his Essay.) My own view is that language, in the formal, syntactical sense, is not a developmental "superstructure" arising from earlier nonlinguistic communication, but a quasi-independent cognitive endowment, with its own

neurobiological developmental schedule, like motor-skills and perception. Thus, from time to time, I will point to affinities and continuities between the symbolic process and signification, but as the reader will surmise, in the end I consider it useless to try to reconcile semantic experience with linguistic theory. I do not believe that "meaning" is a derivative of the linguistic function, and to this extent I have tried to align the arguments which follow with the perspective of the infantile body, subordinating 'signification' to 'symbolic process.'

On the other hand, language interpenetrates so deeply with the rest of the psychological spectrum that it is tempting to think in terms of a "linguistic colonization" of the psychesoma, and to propose an idea suggested to me by Lacan's work, namely that the theory of the Oedipal drama is essentially a theory about socialization-- that is, about accommodation between the "internal world" (with its immediate familial extension at the level of inarticulate psychosomatic communication) and the larger socio-cultural and political world (which we still think of as "external"). In other words, the Oedipal crisis may also be thought of as reflecting a kind of crisis of linguistification in ontogenetic development. It would represent the point of convergence-- the first really serious (and perhaps catastrophic) attempt at global psychic integration-- of all the different mental systems: not just the parental imagos of the representational world; but the perceptual and

sensory systems with the representational system and the affective system with the cognitive system.

At various points throughout the thesis, particularly near the end of Chapter Nine, I have verged on this hypothesis; but I have not advanced it in positive form, because that would require a systematic account of development which is well beyond the scope of this work (not to mention my ability to adduce sufficient evidence).

It is probably true that human beings are what they are in large measure "because of language;" but the question remains whether we have really integrated the evolutionary impact of the linguistic function. In the twentieth century, Badcock (1983), Becker (1971), Brown (1955), Chodorow (1978), Deleuze & Guattari (1972), Diamond (1974), Dinnerstein (1976), Lasch (1985), Marcuse (1955), and Slater (1974), among others, have followed Freud (1930) with various attempts to thematize civilization as an ongoing psychological crisis-- but none has tried to link this crisis to the possibility that psychobiological destabilization may still be latent in the linguistic function. I suspect that this has been so because it is difficult to imagine language as a destabilizing influence without assuming that some meaningful psychosocial organization can and does exist independently of language (waiting to be destabilized)-- and such an assumption has not been readily made. Usually, it is thought that emotions, drives, impulses, and the like, are the

disorganizers of psychic life, whilst language, and its extensions, Reason and Society, merely strive to impose order on the passions. Until recently, this prejudice seems to have had a decisive influence on the modern conception of infancy-- that is, on our view of the human organism without recourse to language-- and has in my view thoroughly distorted our understanding of symbolization.

Infancy is in fact the subplot of my whole discussion. There are several reasons for this, but the main one is that ever since Freud and Piaget succeeded in adding time to the dimensions of psychological theory, the study of symbolic processes has been laden down with "developmental theory"-- by which is meant, among other things: a constructivist account of how "differentiation" emerges (from an otherwise incoherent and undifferentiated bodily experience), as the central function of symbolization. This feature of developmental theory conforms with the widespread belief that our capacity to make sense of the world is contingent on the internalization of coded systems of signification (sometimes called symbolic systems). My own view is that differences and differentiations are capable of making their own way in the world of our experience without the assistance of systems and codes, and that the body-- especially the human body-- normally means and symbolizes without having to acquire a language (in the usual sense of that overtaxed word). Bodily experience is symbolic process, and there is no need to account "ontologically" or

"epistemologically" for "difference" on the basis of constructed systems of signification, or the "laws" or "rules" which govern them. Nor is it legitimate to claim some special and separate epistemological privilege for language and "representations" on the grounds that, during the course of development from the chaos of infancy, bodily functions, processes, and sensations have become "mentalized." The higher primate body is "mental."

Experimental psychology has been moving away from the reflex paradigm as it discovers more complex interactions in the neonatal organism; the results of contemporary research have cast serious doubt on the validity of the traditional narcissism-egocentrism-autism-tabla rasa model of infant experience. As I shall attempt to show in later chapters, the infant can orient and differentiate self within environment purely on the basis of information available to the sensory systems. Thus one of the tasks of a theory of symbolization becomes, implicitly, to adapt the concepts of developmental psychology to a paradigm of human being in which difference and conflict are inherent symbolic dimensions of experience, and not only products of learning, language, and socialization. Symbolic process can no longer usefully be conceived as a constructed system which forms the boundary between "human" and "subhuman" (von Bertalanffy 1981) behaviour; it is already an animal substance.

In the field of human development, there are so many debates around the issues of conceptual differentiation in

theory, phylogenetic and ontogenetic primacy, the role of symbols and language, the epistemological status of perception, and the formative role of social and cultural structures, that I shall not attempt any further to foreshadow my positions on these specific questions here. In the meantime, I shall confine myself to the claim that it is still useful to try to grasp the problem of meaning without recourse to the kinds of system which start from the formal description of language. In this endeavour, I have had brilliant, but sometimes neglected predecessors. Among them, I should mention Marion Milner, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Heinz Werner, and Kenneth Burke. Many will suspect that my own arguments, unlike theirs, only serve to compound the problem I have posed: I will consistently run together the vocabularies for psychic process and symbolic process-- but I shall also confound these terminological clusters with terms for bodily experience, perception, and cognition. I hope that in the end my hybrid discourse will seem reasonably justified to those who are familiar with one or more of the disciplines or traditions which I have brought into play.

I make no claims to synthesis. It is my sense that some of the ambiguities, and cross-disciplinary disputes, which we encounter when we attempt to formulate what Freud called the "metapsychological" basis of mental life or what Cassirer called "symbolic form" or what Durkheim called "collective representations" or what Frege called "meaning"

(Sinn) are not simply produced as effects of faulty theory, but found, discovered, realized: the conceptual oddities are not only logical, but in a real sense objective and inevitable-- they reflect poorly understood aspects of physical nature (the world in which we live). By this, I do not mean that there are conflicting, equally valid, mutually-exclusive "realities," like "natural science" versus "social science"-- an epistemological distinction in which I place no stock. I mean that reality does not in fact contain within itself a first principle which would settle these questions in such a way that one description would become paramount, and equivalent to an explanation of everything.

If this viewpoint is accepted, then we must conclude that the persistent confusion and discord in our account of "mind" is not simply tendentious and arbitrary, but (as Freud knew) instructive in the highest degree. There is no doubt that with more time, experience, and research, many of the "puzzles of the mind" will be solved, or substantially redefined. I believe in this possibility of progress and clarification of knowledge-- though not necessarily that it will "save" us from ourselves (or anyone else who may be lurking about in the universe). But I also believe that our thinking about psychology-- about the nature of thinking itself, and in particular, our understanding of the symbolic capacity-- has not been in a three thousand year old muddle for nothing. I say this because I believe that the mind is

not one thing, different in principle from other things, which can be understood by discovering its basic principle or substance; but rather many things different from each other, acting together more or less as well as they can. And as the reader will see, I am inclined to wonder if it is not this difficult fact, rather than the problem of adapting the human animal to society (or adapting human society to the animal), which is the true source of our sense of the conflict in mental life, from the beginning of postnatal life.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

THE PROCESS OF SYMBOLIZATION

OR THE UNCONSCIOUS AS FINITE SENSE

A new bit of the outside world, which is not the original primary object of the wish, has been made interesting and significant. Thus the original tremendous primary drive to physical union with another living being has been able to transform itself into interest in every conceivable and inconceivable thing in the universe-- by means of the process of symbolization (Milner 1956, 214).

There is an important ambiguity in the psychoanalytic theory of the psychic processes (dream work, defence, symptom-formation, sublimation, etc.), namely, an uncertainty as to whether they belong to the id or the ego, the primary process or the secondary process, the pleasure principle or the reality principle. Of course, we know that a symbolic expression, whether it be considered a sublimation or a symptom, can usually be understood as a compromise, for example, a dynamic resolution of drive and defence, a bargain between different stages of development, or an integration of opposing attitudes toward an object. Symbolization is always overdetermined (cf. Waelder 1936) and thus necessarily many-sided. But we are still not sure how all the tributaries of the symbolic process stand in the psyche. A case in point is the concept of defence itself. It is generally agreed that all the basic defences will partake, in various ways, of the mechanism of displacement, particularly affective displacement: splitting, projection,

identification, repression, and so on. Yet displacement (together with condensation, also a prominent feature of the defences) is considered by many to be a cardinal feature of the primary process or of the id (see, e.g., Hartmann, Kris & Loewenstein 1946, 15; Schur 1966, ch. 9; Lacan 1957). Now, we do not normally think of the primary process as a vehicle of psychological defence. Freud first defined condensation and displacement as central mechanisms of the dream-work. But he did not entirely settle the question: is the dream-work primary process, or is it the defensive activity of the "sleeping ego"?¹ Many of Freud's formulations on condensation and displacement, notably in his discussions of the dream-work in The Interpretation of Dreams or The Introductory Lectures, are ambiguous in this regard.

Anna Freud attempted to clear the matter up in her classic treatise, The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense. She stated in her concluding remarks that:

The dream work itself is not performed by the ego. Condensation, displacement, and the many strange modes of representation which occur in dreams are processes peculiar to the id and are merely utilized for the purpose of distortion. In the same way the various measures of defense are not entirely the work of the ego. Insofar as the instinctual processes themselves are modified, use is made of the peculiar properties of instinct. For example, the readiness with which such processes can be displaced assists the mechanism of sublimation, by which the ego achieves its purpose of diverting the instinctual impulses from their purely sexual goal to aims which society holds

to be higher (1936, 175,).

Ernst Kris was making essentially the same point when he wrote, in the context of artistic creativity, about "regression in the service of the ego" and "a controlled regression of the ego to the primary process" (1953). These formulations, together with those of Hartmann (1939), during the heyday of the Viennese emigration to the English-speaking world, went a long way toward sorting the bizarre psychodynamic concepts that Freud brought to bear on the problem of symbolization; but they did not entirely eliminate the ambiguities of his terminology, or solve all the problems his work had begun to raise.

Apart from the evolution of his terminology (e.g., the 'system ucs,' the primary process, the id), Freud adumbrated many shades and dimensions of the unconscious. There are, for example: the unconscious as the seat of the drives (e.g., not the self-preservative or ego instincts, but the libidinal ones); the unconscious as the well of the death instinct and the arena of the cosmic struggle for sentient existence and organic livelihood; the unconscious as the phylogenetic inheritance of human history (e.g., the memory of the primal horde and the Oedipal constellation, certain apparently universal symbols, Melanie Klein's primal phantasies); the unconscious as the repository of the lived repressed (e.g., memories or fantasies of seduction); the unconscious as the dynamic (primary) process consisting of "unbound" psychic energy governed by the pleasure principle;

the unconscious as a form of thinking (primary process again), in which memories, ideas, images, emotions, and desires are fused, circulated, split up again, recycled, displaced, and generally worked up into eccentric representations of the psychic state itself (e.g., dreams); the unconscious as a kind of perception (e.g., the uncanny symptomatic features of object choice). And finally, there is the unconscious as it is generally conceived in this treatise, the sort of unconscious which so many will impressionistically recognize (in the combination of some or all of Freud's models) when they are first drawn to relive his discoveries: that is, the unconscious as a sort of bizarre, plasticizing, conative organ of intermodal sense.

There is a peculiar kind of peripheral awareness which seems to be related to what is going on out of awareness, a kind of knowing without recognizing which can be sharpened and trained and used very effectively in love, play, and work. But certain knowledge of what is "in" the unconscious is not available to us, at least not until it begins to be conscious; and we can only make inferences about what was happening prior to (or even during) consciousness.² So it is, I believe, rather pointless to insist on maintaining academic appearances by sticking to a single model of the unconscious-- until a new order of facts is discovered. There are two practical justifications for this attitude: to begin with, it is likely that many of the different points of view so far developed have conceptual ties to a more

comprehensive and adequate understanding which may one day emerge, but is still inaccessible to us. If this is so, then it is reasonable to think that several, if not all, of the current views are actually "right," within the limits of present knowledge.³ But if this turns out to be completely wrong, there is still a second, practical reason for deliberately leaving the theoretical field unsettled. Even if only one way of looking at things turns out to be close to the truth, we cannot at the moment tell what it is going to be, and so the more versions of the unconscious we manage to sustain, in whatever tenuous form, the more likely we are to be hitting upon the right one (and making good use of it) without knowing. So to the extent that Freud may have been inconsistent, he was epistemologically wise: Occam's razor and the rule of parsimony really only apply to theories about things that we can directly observe. If we are so foolish as to theorize about phenomena whose existence we only suspect, such as God, the behaviour of subatomic particles, and the unconscious (on the main strength of indirect evidence), then we are probably better off with as many theories, descriptions and explanations as we can reasonably accomodate within the range of the few facts that we have.

The same reasoning applies to the problem of psychological development in infancy.

It is my contention in this thesis that the best way to understand the symbolic process at the present time is to

start from the assumption that we do not know what the first principle of the mind is. All of the available evidence points to the advantage of provisional and open-ended concepts-- specifically, to a conception of mind as a hybrid phenomenon with no stable ontological "foundation" on top of which the rest of 'mind' can be said to be built, or from which the rest can be said to derive, or out of which the rest can be said to "develop." It is thus no particular aspect of the psychological spectrum, but rather the relativity of all the interacting 'parts' of the mind, which I am inclined to identify with the process of symbolization; and a goodly portion of the arguments I shall offer is designed to justify this way of looking at the problem. Unfortunately, this part of my task has obliged me to be more critical of the great psychologists-- Freud, Piaget, and many others-- than their contributions deserve.

I shall provide here only one, fairly straightforward example of what I consider to be the advantage of suspending judgment about ontogenetic priorities and developmental causality. Models of symbolization centrally organized around the concept of repression tend to emphasize the role which symbolization plays in suppressing, managing, or diverting the primary process unconscious in the formation of a healthy personality. The understandable assumption is that there are sectors of the unconscious, repressed or primordial-- notably certain conative and affective urges and intentions-- which are completely impractical,

ineffective, or dangerous in the real world, and that they must be controlled if the individual is to function successfully in society. Thus, if we refer back to the quotation from Anna Freud's The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense, we see that the perspective on the symbolic process is shifted toward the "higher" end of the civilizational hierarchy, which psychoanalysis conventionally represents in the opposition between instinct and sublimation. The instinct has become a means, to be harnessed by the ego for the greater good of society. Now, Anna Freud did not deny that instinctual nature has a part to play in the symbolic process; but she did tend to limit it to the role of an inert material, in itself unmeaningful-- a sort of insentient motion rather than an activity-- which the acquired, symbolizing capacities of the socialized ego could manipulate to their advantage. In the same vein, we may refer to the Kleinian view, which many consider to be diametrically opposed to Anna Freud's. According to Melanie Klein, symbolization always emerges as a displacement of action arising from anxiety about the instinctual orientation toward the primary object. The infant displaces its urges onto new objects, substitutes which then become the subjects of fantasy and play. Thus, once gain, symbolization is conceived as a movement away from the instinctual drive, in the general direction of sublimation. It becomes a means of suppressing or diverting natural sectors of the mind, in favour of other sectors which are

emerging on behalf of society, and in the interests of the individual's survival. We can find this pattern even in the most sophisticated developments of theory, such as Klein's concept of the depressive position.⁴

Yet if we look at these models more closely, and forget about which part of the psychic process is meant to be primary and which secondary, something new emerges, which reveals the committee of perspectives I advocate. We have seen how the classical model (but also the Kleinian heresy) counterposes the symbol to the infant's body. But is this what the Freuds, or Klein, or even the ego psychologists, like Hartmann and Kris, were really saying? In fact, they all reveal, in their different accounts of psychic conflict, that symbolization is perforce an unfolding of the general underlying structure of psychodynamic activity as such-- not just sublimation, but defense itself, and symptom formation as well: there is always an interaction which produces a compromise-- a kind of third dimension. Of course, this is usually pictured as a Newtonian clash of action and reaction, producing a resultant-- but the resultant is always some form of symbolization, some kind of expressive, semantic event. Now, it depends how we choose to interpret this common theme. We can see it as a reductionistic or mechanistic travesty of the beautiful and rarified world of man's symbolic being, as the critics within and without psychoanalysis have always done; or we can see it as a fundamental insight into the infantile body as it expands

and grows in varied interaction with itself, always in a meaningful way. In other words, we can say that the lesson of the psychodynamic model, whatever its limitations, epistemological, phenomenological, or academic, is that the psychic process is the symbolic process, and that no part of the psyche (which reaches down into the body and lives through it)-- not even the drives-- can stand apart from symbolizing activities in order to serve as their foundation or nonsymbolic origin. The resultant itself, the emergent product of somatopsychodynamic action, in its shifting and evanescent movement, is the real substance of the psychical, rather than any one of its many particular determinants, as I shall attempt to show in the concluding chapters of this thesis.

This running together of symbolization and psychodynamics is recognized implicitly in much of the psychoanalytic literature-- although it is more easily detected in the British schools, where Klein's (and Freud's) habit of blurring the conceptual distinctions between psychic process, defence mechanism, and fantasy, is not so rigorously suppressed. In American scientific writing, we find a comparable implication, for example in the writings of Loewald, and the early metapsychological work of Schafer (1968). Loewald (1960) refers to the "integrative process in the ego-reality field," by which he means such developments as introjection, identification, and projection. He points out that the evolution ("derivatives,

modifications, and transformations") of these processes is difficult to detect in later life stages. "The more intact the ego of the patient, the more of this integration taking place in the analytic process occurs without being noticed or at least without being considered and conceptualized as an essential element in the analytic process." We are most likely to encounter the broad outlines of psychic life in cases of "gross ego defect," where the "integrative" dynamics are used for pathological defence. In effect, what Loewald is suggesting is that the processes which are normally discussed under the heading of 'defence mechanism' are magnified glimpses, or stereotypes, of ordinary, general psychic functioning. They are more visible because they are split off to some degree from the rest of the personality, and rigidified for defensive purposes, so that they tend to function independently and quasi-automatically. Such a formulation would be consistent with Freud's principle that the exaggerated and caricatural forms of psychopathology, such as hysterical and obsessional symptoms, afford a privileged insight into the workings of the psyche as such. Hysteria may be compared to dreams (the Dora case), as may psychosis (The Interpretation of Dreams). But everyone dreams. Just as there is no division, but a continuity, between the normal and the pathological (excluding perhaps functional schizophrenia), there is no very sharp line demarcating the conceptual boundaries of the symbolic process, defence, and psychic process in general.

As we shall see in Chapter Five, however, Freud's habit of thinking phylogenetically led him into Lamarckian formulations where the lines of ontogenesis (e.g., ego development) were placed in a hypothetical sequence of evolutionary "derivatives" or "precipitates," so that pleasure was thought to be derived from the avoidance of pain, the reality principle from the (un)pleasure principle, the ego from the id, and so on. In the present work, all of these psychological capacities and principles of functioning will be treated as products of natural selection-- not recapitulations of evolution but organismic givens-- which thus coexist in the endowment of every human organism. I shall assume that their phylogenetic sequence of evolution is largely irrelevant to the study of ontogenesis and symbol formation. Individual development will be viewed as the result of the interplay between the various psychological capacities (rather than as a sequence in which the essence of one develops out of the other).

This perspective is implicit in the psychoanalytic paradigm of mental health. Freud established a world view in which it is possible not only to pose in a new way the problem of how to adapt to 'reality,' but also to ask the utterly revolutionary question: "why did this particular individual split off and suppress such an important part of his natural endowment (thus diminishing his capacity for pleasurable functioning, while creating at the same time a permanent fifth column within)?" From this point of view

what is important is not a guess about which part of the psychic apparatus is ontologically more primary or phylogenetically more primitive, but the more immediate clinical issue of grasping the extent to which the whole of the individual Anlage has taken its cue from experience of the object world, and organized itself accordingly. What we have then, at least implicitly, is not an opposition between nonsymbolic nature and symbolic mind, but the whole symbolizing animal symbolizing itself.

As we shall see again and again in the ensuing chapters, neither psychoanalysis, nor academic psychology, nor philosophy, nor linguistics, nor structuralism have been able to establish a credible theory of the symbolic process. This is partly because they all reduce the question of meaning, in all its costumes, to the problem of opposites, in particular to the pair order : chaos (see Chapters Four and Six). Now, it depends what one means by "opposite." Freud apparently used to tell his students, when they were puzzled by what their patients were saying: "think of the opposite" -- and this was good clinical advice. But in his theoretical writings, he tended to conceive the unconscious simply as the logical opposite of what he took to be the chief characteristics of conscious mental functioning, and this was probably a mistake. It is one thing to say that the unconscious thought or affect is the 'opposite' of the consciously expressed one, but entirely something else to claim that the unconscious itself, in its being, as it were,

is the 'opposite' of consciousness, especially if this means that whatever we think it is the special privilege of consciousness to do-- for example, to perceive or to feel-- is simply absent in the unconscious (cf. G. Klein, 250ff.).

In the English language of emotions, the 'opposite' of 'love' is generally considered to be 'hate', but hate is not therefore the negation of love, in the sense that 'not-love' would be the formal, digital, logico-linguistic negative of 'love'. If p is 'love', the negation of p is not- p , but 'hate' does not fall into the category of not- p in the same way as the simple absence of p does. It is an analogical accompanist of 'love' (along with grief, fear, desire, pleasure, humour, pain, and a host of other phenomena (cf. Freud 1915a, 133f.).⁵ To jump ahead in the discussion a bit, we can say that an emotion (and by extension, any ingredient of semantic or symbolic activity as these are to be understood here), is not a "set" or a "class" of things, such that the presence of the set "in the mind" entails the absence or exclusion of another set, or class. The idea that only one thing can be in one place, at one time, simply does not apply to the psyche; and the idea that the affirmation of something excludes its negation is equally useless. As Freud (1918 [1914]) said of the Wolf Man's sexuality, "...it was only a logical contradiction, which is not saying much. On the contrary, the whole process is characteristic of the way in which the unconscious works" (79). And we can go further than Freud on this point,

because the ineffectuality of formal logic in the area of affects is not just a hypothesis about the unconscious, it is also a fact of conscious and self-conscious mental activity, as philosophers well know. Thus, when the patient says "I love" and the analyst thinks "he hates," or "he loves himself," the analyst is not logically contradicting the patient, in other words, the analyst is not suggesting: "not p, but rather not-p." In fact (and this observation is fundamental to my arguments in Chapter Four on Lacanian deconstruction), the whole transaction has nothing to do with presence versus absence-- or being versus nothingness, or meaning versus meaninglessness, or anything versus anything else; it is about coexisting realities. Thus, the analyst, in a gesture no more presumptuous than that of the average good friend, makes a guess which takes the form: "yes, p indeed, but probably also q."⁶

It is another matter, however, to spell all this out in metapsychological terms the first time round. In consequence, Freud arrived at something like the following serviceable but ultimately misleading theoretical position: everything that Kant had ascribed a century before to the 'ego' in his First Critique-- ordering in time and space, sensory perception, and the synthetic categories of Aristotelian logic-- and everything that Kant had ascribed to the 'superego' in his Second Critique-- conscience, duty, and the categorical imperative-- found its opposite in Freud's unconscious: disorder and disregard of space and

time, blindness to the external world, imperviousness to logic, absence of the principles of contradiction and negation, irresponsibility, impatience, selfishness, and so on. In other words, the discovery of the unconscious easily slipped, as the term itself invites, into hypothetical formulations about the negative of consciousness, and of the methodologies of waking experience, such as logic, language, calculation, planning, care, sociability, and even hypocrisy (if indeed it is true that the unconscious never lies).

In 1956, Marion Milner commented that the concept of primary process was in need of revision because Freud had been so preoccupied with "translating the dream's inarticulate thought into rational language that he did, in fact, neglect the importance of this very inarticulate structure of the unconscious processes which he had himself discovered" (1956, 213). A notable attempt to explore the nature of this inarticulate structure has been made by Matte Blanco (1975), who has provided a useful restatement of Freud's original hypotheses about the characteristics of unconscious functioning in terms of mathematical set theory and symbolic logic. Because his book, The Unconscious as Infinite Sets, offers a genuinely systematic treatment of the central issues in the psychoanalytic theory of the psychic process, I shall embark here on a lengthy digression about this work.

Leaving aside the technical details of his exposition, we may say that Matte Blanco explains the workings of the

unconscious as an example of the "principle of symmetry." According to this principle, if 'a' has a certain relation to 'b,' then 'b' must have exactly the same relation to 'a.' Now, the significance of this correlation lies in the fact that symmetry, with all its connotations of orderliness and rationality, is a relation which rarely holds for the logical analysis of statements about the ordinary world. But sometimes the symmetrical features of equivalence and reversibility of relation do pertain in the particulars of analytic or "Aristotelian" logic. For example, if 'a' is a blood relative of 'b,' then 'b' is certainly a blood relative of 'a'-- they are each blood relatives ("equivalent" in this very limited respect), and they hold the same relationship to each other. However, most observable relationships are not symmetrical in this sense, even the relationships between the blood relatives 'a' and 'b'. For example, if 'a' is the uncle of 'b,' it hardly follows that 'b' is the uncle of 'a,' or that 'a' and 'b' are equivalent entities in any but the most formal and abstract respects. When it comes to such factors as age, colour, size, gender, sexual orientation, personal opinions, physical contours, emotional style, and genetic makeup, the relations between 'a' and 'b' are likely to be "asymmetrical." In fact, as Matte Blanco points out, asymmetrical relations imply a degree of perceptual discrimination and cognitive detail which we associate with consciousness and logical thinking. Asymmetrical relations

belong to rationality. By contrast, symmetrical form ignores the differences between objects, and so, according to Matte Blanco, by generalizing the principle of symmetry, we arrive at a logical representation of the characteristics of unconscious thinking (37-47).

For Matte Blanco, time and space are secondary process constructs. Time ("succession") and space ("contiguity") require "serial ordination," which involves asymmetrical relations. If 'a' is behind 'b', 'b' cannot be behind 'a'. Now, since the purely symmetrical logic of the unconscious destroys serial ordination by identifying the individual with the whole class of beings of which it is a member, it follows that time and space cannot play any role in the unconscious. Thus, under the governance of symmetry, the 'system unconscious' (ucs) appears very much as Freud described it (timelessness, absence of negation and of the law of contradiction, tendency to condense and to displace, an so on) with one significant addition: it is composed of "infinite sets." As Matte Blanco explains, the infinite sets arise because the symmetry rule allows-- and even obliges-- any element that finds its way into the unconscious to become identified with, and thus to include within its set, any other element. If one accepts the principle of symmetry as a valid description of the logic of the unconscious, then it follows that the set of 'angry fathers' or of 'hungry people' is, in the unconscious, always potentially unlimited and undifferentiated.

Now, unfortunately, the argument from logical symmetry does not hold, as we shall see-- and as Matte Blanco himself, in so many words, eventually comes to admit. Curiously enough, however, this attempt to provide a kind of generative grammar of the unconscious by reducing it to the principle of reversibility of subject and predicate (the syntactical essence of the principle of symmetry) does provide support for the view, to be represented here, that the primary process can never be primary in the sense that it might exist before and without concomitant psychic processes (see Chapter Thirteen).⁷ The reason for this is very simple. The principle of symmetry is essentially a formula for systematic reduction, and in order for it to function, it must have something to reduce which has already been achieved psychically by other means. If the system ucs thinks only symmetrically, it must be impervious to all distinctions, and thus lack 'contents' or 'elements' to think symmetrically with. It follows that no mental life can occur under the auspices of the principle of symmetry alone (54-58; 104; 150-1). For example, as Matte Blanco points out, "if displacement is considered from a logical point of view, nothing is displaced... since [according to the principle of symmetry] the original and the displaced aspect are both treated as identical" (43). Matte Blanco takes this to mean that the primary mode of mental functioning does not involve temporal or spatial concepts. A more likely conclusion would be that displacement does not

conform to the general laws of symmetry (although it is conceivable that symbolic processes like displacement do occur through the interaction of incompatible logical systems, as Matte Blanco also suggests (58)).

In consequence of these and other objections, Matte Blanco adjusts his argument in a number of ways as he goes along. The chief modifications are: 1) symmetrical thinking never appears alone, but always in conjunction with some admixture of bi-valent logic or asymmetrical thinking; and 2) the system ucs is not comprised exclusively of symmetrical relations, which would produce a homogeneous, undifferentiated mass, but only of symmetrical relations within sets, the sets themselves being distinguished from each other in the usual, asymmetrical way (150).

Unfortunately, these qualifications undermine the central thesis.⁸ The second, in particular, is drastic, for once even a limited amount of asymmetry, or differentiation, is admitted into the system ucs, the original claims for symmetry as a general principle governing the primary process (or state) dissolve completely. If sets can be distinguished within the system ucs, as Matte Blanco maintains, then so can the elements within the sets, since any element within a set A may also be a member of another set B, and thus be differentiated from the other elements of A on that basis. Otherwise, A (let us say the set of 'hungry people') and B (the set of 'female people') would always become identical, and no distinction between sets

would be possible in the system ucs.⁹

This logical snag has fatal consequences, it seems to me, not so much for the idea that unconscious thinking involves some symmetrical relations-- after all, there could be no symbolic process without reversibility, and a general disregard for logic-- but for the much more interesting and profound idea that the psyche is characterized fundamentally by a symmetrical mode of being (69, 96ff.). It appears from Matte Blanco's book that there is just no way of establishing such an ontological thesis plausibly, a fact which bears on a number of related psychoanalytic concepts, in particular, the concept of primary narcissism (see Chapter Five below).

It is one thing to point out that, as in dreams, the symbolic process so very often acts as if there is no sense of time or law of contiguity or principle of contradiction: two people can be one, the living can be dead, the whole can be inside the part, the sequel can be the antecedent, and so on-- anyone who refuses to accept that people think this way is denying psychic reality; but it is another thing to maintain that there is a primordial or dominant region or function of the mind which operates systematically according to a principle which makes everything identical to everything else.

The assumption that any feature of psychological activity which does not conform to "Aristotelian logic" is ergo a manifestation of another and autonomous system of

laws-- in this case, the laws of symmetry (or indivisibility)-- can be put to all sorts of misuses. For example, it is often said in psychoanalytic circles that the baby knows only the 'part-object,' i.e., the breast, and that this part-object is taken for the whole 'mother.' On the surface, formulations like this fit very nicely with symmetry, and thus conform to the sort of definition of primary thinking we are reviewing. But such analogies have only limited significance. According to the part-object theory of early object relations, there cannot actually be an "equivalence" between the breast and the mother, because the breast-part is already the whole of what the baby knows. There is no mother, other than the breast, and the breast is simply all that the baby experiences of the mother or anything else; so there is no question of equating parts with wholes. Nor is it meaningful to speak of violations of logic in this context, since the terms of a logical proposition are, by definition, not available to be misconstrued by the baby. Given the traditional view of infant cognition, no mental operation can take place of the form: the breast is a part of all of mummy, therefore all of mummy is in this breast, therefore this breast is mummy and mummy is this breast, and the world I am in is symmetrical in this way. If one takes the part-object theory of early object relations seriously, then there is just nothing but the breast-- a single, infinite set. Thus, we arrive at an example of the symmetrical mode of being as Matte Blanco

describes it, though not by deduction, but simply as a presumption about the state of mind that babies are in.

Now, we happen to know that in fact the baby experiences more of the mother than the breast, and that the baby differentiates the mother by her facial features, the sound of her voice, and other features, such as the smell of her breasts (see Chapter Six). Given these sensory discriminations, it is possible that the baby makes them all equivalent, according to the principle of symmetry, so that breast and face and smell and voice are all identical members of the same set, and so that hands and eyes and milk all 'contain' the mother in the same way that mother includes them as parts. One can go even further and speculate that perhaps the baby imagines itself containing and protecting mother, just as mother contains and protects the baby, and so on. There is nothing implausible about these kinds of fantasy elaborations of an object relationship. And they are good examples of symmetrical logic. But what has to be borne in mind is that the infant's experience of the relationship, and the symbolic processes which constitute it, are based on the differentiation of the mother and her parts among themselves and from the infant by both the infant and the mother. Most of the connections involved are asymmetrical and differential. Moreover, they depend upon and evolve in time and space: they can exist because they are within the realm of sensory experience, both of the body and the other-- even

the most fantastic and apparently psychotic imaginings. In other words, there would not be any relationship at all to speak of if Matte Blanco's principle of symmetry held sway over the psyche: thinking itself would be impossible.

Nevertheless doubts about the sensuous, differentiating, spatio-temporal qualities of the primary process unconscious are consistent with the established assumptions of developmental psychology: especially the overestimation of the role of the preconscious ego and the 'secondary process' in ordinary perception and cognition; and a corollary confusion between language and symbolization which is widespread in literate cultures (see Chapters Two, Three, and Four). As I shall be demonstrating, much of the evidence supporting the belief that, prior to maturation of the ego, psychological life approximates or equals a homogeneous, undifferentiated, disembodied mass of pure feeling-states, such as need-tension and gratification, is based on false inferences from the absence of articulate language in infancy and the overgeneralization of superficial linguistic phenomena which arise during the early stages of language acquisition and training (Chapter Nine). To illustrate this, let me take again one of Matte Blanco's examples: his five year old son said that he was going to wear his tennis shoes because they "were quicker than his sandals" (356). From the fact that the child used the modifier 'quicker' in this way, Matte Blanco concluded that his son had been speaking from within a world of

"homogeneous indivisible totality" i.e., that the child could not differentiate between himself and his shoes in the act of running, even though he had clearly distinguished between his shoes and his sandals. The implication of this kind of theorizing-- very widespread in the social sciences -- is that linguistically eccentric expressions are really unintended effects of an inherent "animal" confusion, a kind of pre-social, pre-symbolic state of primary being; and that meaningful symbolizations are the result of a progressive differentiation leading eventually to the summits of logical language. This is a view which, though supported by much of mainstream psychoanalytic metapsychology, runs directly contrary to one of Freud's most important clinical insights, namely that odd expressions are likely to conceal genuine semantic phenomena, highly motivated and meaningful in a personal sense.

When Freud said that the unconscious, the system ucs, the primary process, or the id, was "timeless," the "seat of Illogic," indifferent to opposites, and so on, he did not make it clear whether he felt that these features were exclusive, systematic structures of the unconscious. Inspired by Fechner, Freud did adumbrate a neurological model of the psyche as a self-regulating apparatus even prior to Cannon's enunciation of the principle of homeostasis; but since this period in intellectual history, the term 'system' has acquired formalistic connotations which it did not have in Freud's day. When he wrote, for

example, of the absence of time, he was not always making an ontological statement about the unconscious, but merely emphasizing the fact that the intensity and influence of certain unconscious contents, especially childhood memories, often remain apparently unchanged by the passage of years, as is now well-known from the accounts of victims of forgotten traumatic events. Such phenomena are no proof against time, even in the unconscious. Where Matte Blanco differs from Freud is in the wish to deduce Freud's observations and inferences about the primary process from first principles, to establish universal autonomic functional laws, such that the unconscious dimension is conceived, on logical grounds alone, as literally devoid of temporally and spatially based differentiations of any kind. In this respect, the theory is reminiscent of the Kantian view, which we shall encounter again and again in the literature on symbolization, that time, space, and sensory reality are intellectual constructs, thus barred to the untutored phenomenal body (symmetrical being or primary narcissism)-- and that symbolization is for this reason necessarily a secondary derivative or additive phenomenon of mind (or culture), where the term 'mind' stands for the seat of concepts, schemata, structures, and forms (see esp. Chapter Six) .

What is original in Matte Blanco's work is the intuition that the "illogic" of the unconscious follows a definite and undeviating pattern. Unfortunately, in order

to make this argument stick, he has had to assign the system ucs, through the principle of symmetry, a host of abstract qualities-- unity, identity, equivalence, and symmetry itself-- which are more typically features of digital systems of signification usually ascribed to the secondary process. In consequence, the symmetrical interpretation of displacement, for example, bares little resemblance to the highly mobile, shifting, emotional activity Freud associated with the psychic process; as Matte Blanco defines it, displacement is rather more like an illusion of movement imposed by consciousness (Aristotelian logic) on the inert homogeneity of unconscious contents (353).

Like Lacan, whose insights into the symbolic process shall be reviewed in a subsequent chapter, Matte Blanco confuses the primary process with certain conventional, formal properties of language. For example, many consider it a precondition of language that the linguistic sign retain its formal identity, regardless of context: it must be "infinitely transmissible" (Derrida 1967b, 12). In this sense, the linguistic unit is expected to be timeless and independent of its physical embodiments in a way which no enduring object or thought can ever be. Moreover, like the members of symmetrical infinite sets, it is possible for conventional signs to replace one another without any adjustment of syntactical order, thus achieving a degree of formal equivalence and fungibility which cannot be attained psychologically by means of condensation or displacement of

affects or objects or ideas, all of which retain the traces of their origin in sensory experience, no matter how much they may be transformed in primary process thinking or assimilated to innate ideas and archetypes, such as the primal breast or the mandala.

Matte Blanco argues, with some justification, that the unconscious does not know individuals, but only classes of things; it would be more accurate to say that the unconscious is no respecter of conventional identities or digital distinctions (like presence versus absence, or the logical negative). We might say that the unconscious grasps all sorts of differences between things, but not their mutual exclusivity; and that the unconscious experiences and exploits the sensory dimensions, but favours no specialized method of organizing them. In contradistinction to the 'id' or 'system ucs,' which refer to specialized 'parts' or functions, the unconscious corresponds to no distinct region of the mind or separate mode of being. In line with the various cognitive, affective, and processual concepts which populate Freud's writings, and with the diagram in the New Introductory Lectures (1933, 78), the unconscious is everywhere, it is a dimension of feeling, sensation, emotion, drive, perception, cognition, ego, superego, id-- it is the semantic organ of sense. In practice, of course, ideas about special aspects and types of unconscious functioning are unavoidable; but as soon as we try to generalize one of these into a theory of the unconscious as

a separate system, we forfeit any chance of understanding the symbolic process, and we make the mistake of confusing symbolization with language and meaning with socialized cognition.

The ingredients of the symbolic process-- of unconscious perception, dreams, affects, sensations, symptoms-- are irremediably particular-- too idiosyncratic to be generalizable.¹⁰ Unconscious thoughts do not subsist in the form of concepts or representations, in the conventional sense of these terms. They are embedded in the dynamics of sensorimotor intelligence, or what Werner (1927; Werner & Kaplan, 1963) called "physiognomic apprehension." What we call a "symbol" is really a sophisticated articulation of the organismic-semantic matrices of experience, where proprioception, postural and kinesic sense, body image, sensory perception, affect, memory, and fantasy combine and exchange with one another in a continuous and fluctuating adumbration of the body. Even a discrete symbol, acting as the immediate, conscious focus of psychic activity, cannot be reduced entirely to one of the oppositional terms in a dual, reversible, reproducible relationship. Conventional symbols always suggest something of the paradox of a tertium quid. The symbol is the manifest content of a relationship-- not one of its articulated and generalizable terms. Of course, we may think it and dream it over and over again, but not so as to form a system of signification. (As Freud pointed out, the

unravelling of the dream-work leads to a kind of unfathomable "navel"-- a psychosomatic enigma [Weber, 65-83]). The semantic charge of the symbol is sustained only so long as the symbol helps to embody the mingling of parts of the self and parts of the object. This act of objectification evinces a kind of individuality, because it is invested by the relationship itself, with all of its accidents and irrational components. Like a wedding ring, it cannot be cashed in for an equivalent which reproduces its meaning (Baudrillard 1972, 64-67). Even discursive and institutionalized symbols like the cross maintain this aura of individuality, not just in the ahistorical sense of being identical to themselves, and universal, like a sign. The cross remains the cross because it is embedded in a ritualized narrative, enfolding and unfolding a particular, time-and context-bound constellation of interactions, sustaining them psychologically, for good or ill, acquiring or losing meaning as it is passed along in the sensory dimensions (see Obeyesekere 1981).

The symbolic process pertains to a finite sense, not an infinite set. Of course, it is true that the symbolic object radiates outward, potentially encompassing everything, like an emotion. But this is not the result of a reductive process in which individuals are turned into classes and everything becomes equivalent; it has to do with the fact that the symbolic process draws experience into its orbit. It is a kind of trans-substantiating activity which

seizes the accidents of time and space and infuses them with meaning by drawing meaning out of them. It works not by means of identity or equivalence, but through analogy¹¹ and redintegration (see Chapter Ten).

Language theorists have emphasized the potential latent in natural language for autonomous functioning which has made it such a potent instrument of cultural evolution. In practice, however, the distinction between symbol and sign is neither as radical nor as empty as twentieth century formalists maintain. The connection between the symbol and experience may be just as arbitrary (unmotivated) as the relationship between signifier and signified (cf. Saussure, 68f.); presumably the difference lies in the fact that symbols lend themselves less easily to becoming fungible units of signification. The symbol does not act as a place marker or position holder in a discourse: in a manner of speaking, it is the "discourse." It does not mean (in the sense of signify-- there is no referent for the symbol to stand in for); it is meant. But the question remains whether language can be contrasted with this quality so sharply. Do signifiers really behave like pieces on a chess board (Saussure), or tools in a kitbox (Wittgenstein)? It is certainly possible to make them do so-- even to streamline them into "systems;" but poets think in terms of words rather than signifiers, and this "word" quality of the linguistic sign is in fact difficult to dislodge in the diction of a native speaker. In theory, the sign ought to

be replaced quite easily with another sign-token, but signifiers can become the vehicles of words as well as signifieds-- sometimes holophrastic conglomerations of them -- which are deeply rooted in the organismic-symbolic matrix (Werner & Kaplan).

(In the field of cultural anthropology, V. W. Turner (1969, 1974) and Mary Douglas (1966, 1970) have described this syncretic (Werner) dimension of "liminal" thinking and "natural symbols" at more highly organized and integrated levels of socialized interaction and ritual in "primitive" and "developed" societies. Merleau Ponty (1945) attempted to elucidate corporeal semantics in philosophical terms, and O'Neill (1982, 1985) has brilliantly extended the insights of phenomenology to developmental social psychology and the theory of the "body politic." In linguistics, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have elucidated the contribution of bodily orientation and interaction in schematizing the metaphorical substructures of ordinary language.)

Symbolic Rhythms

Freud spoke of "psychic reality," and less frequently of the "internal world," and Melanie Klein (1932) developed these concepts into a somewhat concretistic, dramaturgical vision of an unconscious world of "internal objects"-- of good objects, and bad and persecuting objects, breasts, feces, penises, and wombs. She placed central emphasis on the role of the internalized "good object" in maintaining

relative harmony of the psychic functions. These ideas have evolved into a psychoanalytic theory of "object relations" (Fairbairn 1954; Guntrip 1961) which makes fuller use than did Freud or Klein of the insight that the personality is formed in relation to other personalities, and that the internal world is interdependent with other internal worlds. In the later chapters of this thesis, it becomes a central argument that Klein's exotic ideas about the internal world raise and address some of the most fundamental questions about the symbolic process, and that it is precisely the epistemological untidiness of her theoretical writings which makes them so valuable.

The strength of the internal world in the human psychic economy is really a measure of species intelligence-- that is, it is latent in the highly reticulated capacity of the organism for interacting with and processing both itself and the environment. To put the internal world to use, as some species begin to do, is like harnessing the heat generated by circuit wiring or the friction of moving parts. Psychic life is part of the atmosphere of the brightly functioning organism. And one internal world inevitably breeds another. The notion that one's own is the only 'inside' in the world is foreign to psychic reality because the ability to imagine oneself as an inside is ipso facto the capacity to imagine others. As George Herbert Mead (1934) argued, self-consciousness is inseparable from consciousness of the other. It is of course possible to pretend that the

internal world is exclusive, but this is a pathogenic fiction which breaks down in self-contradiction. In order to establish this kind of interpretation of one's experience, one has to posit a pure 'outside'-- thereby leaving oneself absolutely alone in one's own field of experience, as if what one feels is entirely isolated, incomparable, and unsharable. For an infant to imagine this, it would have to stare into its caretaker's eyes, and see only an inert field of externality which has nothing in common with itself. In such a state, one does not differentiate between the eyes that look back and the indistinct weave of the generalized outside which is imagined as totally other than one's inside; instead, one has the fantasy that there is no inside out there and that what one perceives is thoroughly and irremediately alien. One pretends that oneself alone has sensations and feelings, and that the environment is utterly and completely devoid of anything comparable to one's own experience.

This is a powerful fantasy, but it rarely takes absolute hold on the organization of the psyche. In order to make solipsism a psychic fact, something that an observer could describe as an actual state of mind, such as catatonia, there would have to be no projection whatsoever. And one would not be able to introject either. One would simply perceive, with absolutely pristine, cold objective detachment. But it is virtually impossible to sustain this impression, because it would destroy the sensation of

dynamic interplay between interior and exterior which is constitutive of psychic life, and replace it with an abstract opposition. To achieve this, one would have to abandon the power to differentiate within one's own experience, and so be unable to experience anything at all. And there is no serious evidence that there is a time of life when one cannot experience anything at all.

On these grounds, I have argued in Chapter Ten that the concept of basic narcissism must be redefined. Primary narcissism has been described traditionally as the absence of an external object world, or as an inability to conceive the internal world of the other. It makes more sense to think of narcissism as a form of symbolization, a state arising precisely from awareness of the presence, in the perceived external world, of the object's inside. More specifically, narcissism is belief in the presence of the self in the internal world of another-- what Melanie Klein called "projective identification." Moreover, it follows from this that the clinically indispensable concept of "narcissistic injury" must be reexamined: for if narcissism is one of the initial consequences of perceiving otherness, rather than its psychic opposite, then-- although narcissistic injury may be manifested in the common intolerance of impingement by "reality" on the "pleasure ego"-- it is less likely to be rooted in this sort of phenomenon than in the experience, whether real or imagined, of harm occurring in the internal world via the internal

world of the other.

When we say that something has intrinsic value or "substance," it means that we have put it there, and it is in this sense that the symbolic process may be compared to what the German and English Romantic thinkers called "Imagination" (and to what literary critics subsequently named the "pathetic fallacy"). Coleridge's discussion of Imagination is related to what Federn (1952) described as "ego-feeling" (in contradistinction to the ego as an agency), and bears an affinity with Klein's "good internal object." When Coleridge lamented the failure of his imagination in his ode on Dejection,¹² he was describing the effect of the depressive constellation of his internal object world. The depersonalization Coleridge and so many other thinkers of the age described did not represent a failing power of imagination, but a dystonic variation of it. The imagination is not a separate faculty, although the visual bias of dreams, and perhaps of philosophical language as well, leads many to think of it as a specialized mode of being, while others, for the same reasons, deny the reality of the imagination altogether. Although Coleridge wrote about mental "powers" and entities with their own distinct properties, he knew, as did Kant, that the imagination is a relation of the mind to itself, as well as to the world. There is what some might still call a paradox in this, for it requires us to say that there is no mind until the mind interacts with itself. If we think in terms of the origins

of psychological activity, we are forced to conclude that neither imagination, symbolization, nor psyche-- none of these quasi-totalities-- are actually present as definite participants, like horses at a starting gate: the symbolic process and its derivatives, the imagination and the psyche, only emerge when the standard entries (all of the various sensory, affective, conative, and cognitive capacities) in the mental field have actually begun to shift around in relation to one another. Thus the unifying or "esemplastic" power which Coleridge ascribed to the imagination, with its ability to produce something essentially more original than a fanciful recombination of sense-data, is better understood in terms of the intermodal orientations of the experiential apparatus and the internal world.

Symbolization has the character of an emergent process, that is, it involves activities and interactions whose semantic culmination is not rigidly dependent on initial conditions, and whose principles of coherence are not reducible to the equilibrium structures of the larger systems within which it unfolds (Levin 1987a, 27).¹³ Even the solid, serial, two dimensional fixity of a text has a latent symbolic dimension which is comparable to the uncertainty and multiplicity of extemporaneous speech, with its engagement of competing sensory systems. The most rigidly prepared document can easily excite divergent channels of mental activity, if for no other reason than the fact that the meaning of any syntagm only becomes available

through its temporal unfolding, and its supercession by others. No structure of signification can be so timelessly transparent -- or as the structuralists say, "synchronic"-- as to be capable of entirely suppressing the symbolic dimension of mental life, because signification itself depends upon symbolic processess in the same way that energy derived from nuclear fission requires a controlled explosion. The great literary philosopher Kenneth Burke (1966, 1972) described how the wish to organize language into communicable works mobilizes a kind of "principle of perfection" or "terministic compulsion to carry out the implications of one's terminology" (1966, 19), which (like Freud's repetition compulsion) outstrips the conscious intentions of any author: the "logic" of arguments, character developments, moods, and imagery generates independent systems of meaning and unintended consequences which subvert the best-laid plans of the verbal artisan (cf. Bertalanffy 1967, 30). We see this in the way that certain conventions of verbal form and genre, ranging from grammar to the mnemonic narrative techniques of the epic "singer of tales" (Lord 1960), impose constraints on the intentionality of the language user. But there is a more profound kind of indeterminacy to be discovered in the equipotentiality of the symbolic process. Secondary process thinking by itself cannot contain the activity of symbolization to the same degree that it can manipulate the pre-conscious rules of conventional form in the service of predictable outcomes.

Yet this freedom from ruling ego gestalts and 'system conditions' which distinguishes the symbolic process is not simply a matter of random variability. Emergent symbolization is charged with anticipation, redolent with achieved and newly forming patterns of incipient meaning which do not exclude or overlook accidents and irrelevant details, but adapt to them and draw meaning from them. As the art theorist Anton Ehrenzweig (1967) puts it: "Displacement of proper emphasis is a typical primary process technique...": "unconscious scanning-- in contrast to conscious thought which needs closed gestalt patterns-- can handle 'open' structures with blurred frontiers which will be drawn with proper precision only in the unknowable future" (46,42). (On the concept of "equifinality" in open systems, see von Bertalanffy [1962, 18].)

This brings us to the psychological implications of Kant's third Critique, the Critique of Judgment (1790), in which a theory of thinking as a "non-willed order" (to use Marion Milner's [1950, 95-105] phrase), or motivated disorder, appeared in knowledge terms for the first time in European history. Kant's model of the mind in the Critique of Judgment, and his concept of the sensus communis (misunderstood as "common sense," but closer to our concept of the unconscious as amodal sense-- a "community" of senses, or 'all the senses in common') parallels the rise of the historical possibility, in the political imagination of his day, of more open social forms capable of tolerating a

good deal of "chaos" and competition between divergent interests. The transcendental ego and universal superego of the first two critiques began to give way in the third Critique to a parliamentary concept of the mind in which all interests and capacities are represented. But the implications of Kant's reflections on aesthetics have been largely ignored in the social sciences, even since Freud's discovery of the unconscious.

It is well known that the Romantic conception of the Imagination as a divine faculty of creation owes much to Kant's "Transcendental Deduction" (see Warnock 1976). But unlike the imagination as he described it in the Critique of Pure Reason, the symbolic process is not an activity of synthesis-- that is, it is not simply a mental agency added onto raw, serial, sense impressions in order to give them coherence, constancy, unity, and three-dimensional solidity. The scattered "manifold" for which Kant tried to find a new principle of order does not represent (as he claimed in demonstration of the inadequacy of Hume's empiricism) a natural disunity of bodily senses -- it reflects the natural disunity of the mind as a whole; and the symbolic process (imagination, psyche) is not a faculty of synthetic construction interposed between disorganized sensory experience and the orderliness of pure mind; it is rather more like spillage over the jostling functional boundaries of a heterogeneous domain, the hybrid psychesoma. As I shall attempt to show in Chapter Six, perception-- even in

infancy-- has a largely unconstructed coherence of its own, and this coherence should not be confused with hypotheses about what is "mental" as opposed to "physical" in perception and thinking. What the empiricist philosophers and Kant called "Understanding" is to a large extent already built into ordinary perception, and no special faculty of images, categories or concepts (in contradistinction to neurological processes which already form part of the sensory apparatus) is required to support it. The symbolic process may become involved with perception and influence it-- but it does not form perception as such, in mentalistic fashion, or through cultural determinism; it uses the senses and interacts with them, often breaking them down or distorting them, diverting them away from conscious direction, like any other cognitive activity. To the extent that perception is wrought by symbolization or imagination-- or the categories of Understanding-- it is simply engaging with some other aspect of the psychic spectrum, whether cognitive, affective, or conative. As for the symbolic process-- indeed, for the concept of psyche as such-- we have already seen that this is nothing more than the possibility of such intermodal interactions, which are anchored exclusively in no particular faculty of mind.

In the Critique of Judgment, Kant came closer to grasping this when he spoke of purposiveness without purpose, the sensus communis, the reflective (aesthetic and teleological) judgment, and pleasure. What Kant describes

as the harmonious interplay of understanding and imagination in aesthetic pleasure actually alludes to the interplay of more than two cognitive faculties-- but the principle involved is the same. The aesthetic basis of the symbolic process is even more evident in the concept of reflective judgment. According to the Critique of Pure Reason, judgments of the rational understanding bring mind and nature into harmony according to the universal a priori conditions of possible knowledge; the particular is subsumed by the schematism of the concept, and subordinated to the general law: it is a member of a class and an instance of the known or the knowable. But in the reflective judgment, "only the particular is given for which the universal has to be found" (1790, 15). Kant describes a situation in which epistemological concerns are entirely displaced, and the mind seeks harmony with itself in an encounter where the a priori has no purchase. Rather than descending from the universal, the faculties must "ascend from the particular" (16). As Kant concedes, it is never clear what epistemological status the results of this process actually have, since the cognitive component of the relationship is largely improvised, and the principles according to which the object is felt to be reached evolve on an ad hoc basis. "The judgment is called aesthetical just because its determining ground is not a concept, but the feeling (of internal sense) of that harmony in the play of the mental powers, so far as it can be felt in sensation" (65).

Through the sensus communis, "the imagination in its freedom awakens the understanding and is put by it into regular play, without the aid of concepts...." Only thus "does the representation communicate itself, not as a thought, but as an internal feeling of a purposive state of the mind" (138).

This is the predicament of the infantile body, and in capturing it through the categories of the Enlightenment, Kant did for modernity what Rabelais did for the Renaissance. The liberatory implications of Kant's aesthetic-- the dethronement of Reason as deus ex machina-- have always been implicit in the psychoanalytic model of the mind, as Herbert Marcuse (1955) in particular attempted to demonstrate from a civilizational perspective. But social scientific and philosophical syntheses of Freudian psychology have usually foundered on the latent rationalism of constructivistic epistemologies, such as those of Cassirer, Piaget, and the structuralists. In the end, the growth of social scientific knowledge has not made it any easier to decide whether symbolization is 'primary,' in the sense of Freud's unconscious primary process drive activity, or whether it is 'primary' in the sense of Kant's transcendental synthesis of apperception, Wittgenstein's "language," or Matte Blanco's "Aristotelian logic." In fact, the symbolic process-- in its very 'primacy'-- is secondary from both points of view: it constitutes no particular phase of mental activity-- yet there would be no talk of 'psyche' without it. By the same token, the

secondary process in the classical sense studied by Piaget and the ego psychologists turns out to be as primary in its nucleus as Freud's primary process itself-- yet still not as essential to the concept of the psyche as symbolization. Rather than choose between the primary and secondary process, the solution may be to develop a theory of some kind of "tertiary," or intermediary process which emerges from their interaction-- as a kind of ex post facto psychic substance or "emergent property." I have presented the outline and rationale for such a theory in Chapters Twelve and Thirteen.

The art theorist Anton Ehrenzweig (1967) has proposed a "double concept" of the primary process (129) which goes a long way in this direction. Ehrenzweig's line of investigation entails a novel revision of dynamic theory which does not, however, sacrifice the essence of psychoanalytic thought by trying to ground it in the realms of the suprasensible and the mystical, as Matte Blanco and Bion (1970, 41-54; 87-91) do. The theme of Ehrenzweig's speculations is precisely the function of the unconscious as an organ of experience and perception-- "a precision instrument for creative scanning" (5): this is the primary process as dynamic, intermodal sense which we have already found dormant in Kant, Coleridge, and Freud.

Ehrenzweig's aim in behalf of aesthetic theory is to establish "the superior efficiency of unconscious [perception] in scanning the total [perceptual] field" (32).

What psychoanalysis has traditionally described as a loss of definition through unconscious processing is conceived by Ehrenzweig as a cyclical tendency toward dedifferentiation. By dedifferentiation, however, Ehrenzweig does not mean loss of sensory discrimination, but suspension of supraordinate schemata, whether they be rooted in transcendental apperception, secondary process ordering and reality testing, or the tendency to establish the "good gestalt" described in the literature of experimental psychology. As I interpret this argument, dedifferentiation involves bracketing of generalized, integrated differential functions and concepts, rather than elimination of experiential differences as such. According to the Gestalt psychologists, ordinary secondary process perception splits the perceptual field into "figure" and "ground." While dedifferentiation undermines this kind of surface organization of thought, thus creating a virtually nonfunctional field of experience unfamiliar to the reality principle (but also to the [un]pleasure principle, as I shall argue in Chapter Five), it nevertheless encourages a recathexis of the neglected dimensions of the object (which at this level includes the proprioceptive self). Devalued fragments, split off and marginalized by secondary process dissection of the perceptual field, are restored to prominence and resemantized on an improvised sensory plane which fuses the neglected "background" with the now de-idealized Gestalt "figures" of conventional organism-

environment exchange. Overprivileged cognitive patterns imposed in the service of steady state consciousness through secondary revision and regulatory 'feedback' are dissolved or relativized in order to permit the kind of "free play of faculties" which Kant described in his account of the pleasure specific to aesthetic judgment. What is involved here is not necessarily just the pleasure of the [un]pleasure principle, the secondary pleasure of tension discharge (although it must be recognized that Freud's principle of constancy captures at the metapsychological level an essential aspect of dedifferentiation as a phase of both psychic and circadian somatic rhythms¹⁴). Nor is it the pleasure gained in the reconstitution of secondary process form and conceptual order (sublimation); there is a third, intermediary pleasure in the unregulated faculties themselves, the funktionslust of psychic activity as such. Steady state feedback gives way to a kind of "feedforward": an aesthetic unravelling which becomes available to us phenomenologically in the form of dream, fantasy, and "hallucination." Although this is necessarily "a posteriori"-- an emergent property-- it is where the "primary" quality of dedifferentiation lies: in the unintegrated, unwilled coherence of the symbolic activity itself, normally eclipsed in consciousness by the pragmatic and moral demands of the drive and object goal-orientations inherent in the pain and reality principles which Freud described (Levin 1987a).

Marion Milner (1987) has described a comparable process of undifferentiation which "deliberately attends to sinking itself down into a total internal body awareness" (240). She comments that behind pathological auto-erotic and narcissistic states, there may be a wish to rediscover "a beneficent kind of narcissism, a primary self-enjoyment which is in fact a cathexis of the whole body..." (238). Milner calls this the "concentration of the body," and relates it to certain infantile states, aesthetic perception, and an unusual kind of psychoanalytic attention required for the treatment of "borderline" patients. Although the concentration of the body is "inarticulate, dark, and undifferentiated," and pushes the background functioning of proprioception into the foreground of awareness, it has a wide focus, and "what looks like a turning away from the object and the outside world does in fact seem to result in the opposite from turning away, that is it results in an increased perception of the nature and significance of the external object" (240).

Returning briefly to the earlier discussion of *p* and not-p: we can see that although pain is not the logical opposite of pleasure, it is its analogical concomitant. As Ehrenzweig points out, the pain of dedifferentiation is relative to the flexibility of the ego: "Whether we are to experience chaos or high creative order depends entirely on the reaction of our rational faculties" (35). As we shall see in Chapter Twelve, this argument is borrowed from

Winnicott; though it has been elaborated most effectively by Marion Milner (1950): the idea is that psychological health, illusive as it may be, can be measured in a rough and ready way against tolerance for regression. The catastrophe of dedifferentiation, with its latent prospect of psychological death, increases to the extent that psychosomatic stability has come to depend upon conscious monitoring of the secondary process itself, in the service of a reactive state of readiness which is normally only one of the purposes of ego organization. At the extreme, this is borderline psychology and schizophrenia, where panic and disarray of the ego apparatus do not result from regression as such, but rather from enhanced fear of it, leading to rigidification of ordinary Gestalt patterns of perception and a consequent fragmentation and disorientation of the experiential field. As Schilder (1950) maintained, perception requires not just focus, but dynamic movement: "Seeing with an unmoved eye when inner and outer eye muscles are out of function would not be real seeing, and would not be seeing at all, if the body were completely immobilized at the same time" (15).

Ehrenzweig understands the symbolic process essentially in terms of Melanie Klein's concept of projective identification, as elaborated by Bion (1962, 31-37). (I will not discuss here Bion's theory of alpha and beta functions, according to which unintegrated infantile bits (frustrations, bad breasts) are transformed by alpha function into usable components of the thinking process.¹⁵)

Symbolization always unfolds along a circuit via the object, even if the object be only fantasized or remembered. This passage through the object involves a mixture of libidinal and aggressive trends toward valuation (cathexis, semantization, possession) and splitting off (evacuation, expression, discharge). In Bion's concept of reverie, the object of projective identification becomes a kind of undifferentiated matrix, or "containing" function-- an extension of the ego-- where unwanted fragments of the personality are deposited, metabolized or digested, and reabsorbed (Ehrenzweig, 102-5), usually in "detoxified" form.¹⁶ Bion also described an alternation between the paranoid, projective, splitting phase of psychic activity, and a depressive, internalizing, reparative phase. In proposing the formula $Ps \leftrightarrow D$ (suggesting a kind of elemental pattern of thinking which consists of the oscillating co-presence of the paranoid and depressive positions) Bion (1963, 35, 37-41) in a sense equalized Melanie Klein's sequential stages of affective development into an ongoing flux-- making it a loop rather than a linear sequence. This reformulation brings out the depressive aspect of projective identification which Klein had not made sufficiently clear: the "persecutory" reaction of splitting and projection (Ps) presupposes the "depressive" constitution of the object (D), just as the reparative [re]integration of the object (D) presupposes its aggressive decomposition (Ps).

In its most primitive form, this pattern might be conceived as the pure operation of the primary process side of the dream work: the constant interplay of displacement and condensation. Bion refers to the intermittence of Ps <> D as a kind of "fragmentation <> integration" (1963, 42). But the implication of Bion's mapping of projective identification onto the Kleinian positions is that any supposed instinctual periodicity cannot be pristine in form. Every cycle of condensation and displacement will be laden with feeling states, affects, and object experiences which will spin off in conjunction with perception and cognition. Thus, Ehrenzweig's choice of the term "ego rhythm" seems appropriate as a way of depicting the dynamic shape of the symbolic process. The concept of ego rhythm¹⁷ modifies the Ps <> D model by highlighting the regressive and reconstructive aspects of each emotional position. One of Ehrenzweig's central points is that the aggression of the paranoid position ("fragmentation") also involves an important element of unsplitting and dedifferentiation, since the decomposition of the experiential field requires some resolution of the idealizing split which privileges the figure-ground relation. This is not precisely "integration," in the sense of secondary process object constancy and the construction of a "whole object;" but it does bring out a connective aim. As Freud (1918) argued in his discussion of the Schreber case-- and as we saw again in Milner's discussion of the "concentration of the body"-- not

every regressive delusion is a withdrawal from reality, since it may harbour revival of a libidinal link with the external world. The depressive container function of the object is by no means the exclusive vehicle of creative and symbolic thinking, as so many Kleinians assume. Indeed, the depressive position may be achieved at the cost of some distortion, arising chiefly from defensive dissection of experience into figure and ground, form and content, which will always result in some devaluation and marginalization of those properties and propensities falling short of the idealizing Gestalt "principle of good form."

It follows from considerations like these that the usual attempt to grasp elementary psychodynamic movements in terms of sharply defined oppositions is likely to be misleading. The traditional schematism counterposing order and chaos is too crude to be very helpful in sorting out the vicissitudes of psychic functioning. As we have seen, there is a destructive component in depressive introjection as well as paranoid projection, and fragmentation can reveal fluid new links where reparative pacification of the object zone had established rigid boundaries. Moreover, as Ehrenzweig emphasizes, the two positions, Ps and D, do not resolve, when viewed dynamically, into just two phases; they are necessarily mediated by periods of unconscious "manic" activity. The manic interludes which Ehrenzweig describes also mobilize activities of dedifferentiation and integration, though in essence they are neither paranoid nor

depressive. Ehrenzweig attributes this lack of fit with the Kleinian positions to the fact that in discussing aesthetics he is probably "referring to comparatively late stages of ego development" (103, 294). But it is more likely that the discrepancy lies in Klein's overly polarized, pain-centered model of infant object-relatedness, which underestimates the importance of intermediary states, whether passive and quiet, or active and turbulent, in which it doesn't matter to the infant whether it is inside or outside itself or the object (cf. Milner 1950, 161). Ehrenzweig himself seems to overemphasize the omnipotent aspect of this trans-substantiating phase, at the expense of the destructuring repose, or "unintegration" (Winnicott 1958, 149f; 1965, 61; see also, Burke, 1966, 49), which may be found in certain kinds of sleep, being alone (Winnicott 1965, 56-63), and unexcited playfulness. In general, however, these periods of intermission, or transition, can be interpreted either as catalytic preparations for the secondary formation of the object in the depressive phase, or as catabolic decomposition of the object pursuant to schizoid regression in the paranoid phase.

Psychic Substance

[The indeterminacy of boundaries]
invites the natural question of when an
object belongs to a system and when it
belongs to the environment.... The
answer is by no means definite....
Subdivision...into two sets, system and
environment, can be done in many ways
which are in fact quite arbitrary....

It is clear...that any given system can be subdivided into subsystems. Objects belonging to one subsystem may well be considered as part of the environment of another subsystem (Hall & Fagan, in Watzlawick et al., 121-2).

What we see in the oscillating rhythms of the organismic-semantic matrix of experience is not what we get. The conceptual polarities through which we define the psychic process-- introjection, projection, inside, outside, regression, sublimation, chaos, order, and so on-- do not actually refer to psychic contents: they are more like the "system parameters" of psychic functioning, not components of the symbolic process so much as its idealized limits. We never actually experience integration or disintegration, wholes or parts, insides or outsides, but we conceptualize and articulate them very easily. What we do experience lies somewhere in between these parameters-- on the way, perhaps, from one to the other. Indeed, the belief that order and chaos are real states may emanate from experiences of certainty or confusion, respectively, about whether one is heading toward one or the other, rather than in the destinations themselves. But if this betwixity is where the symbolic process actually unfolds, it makes a picture which is a good deal more tacit than its conceptual frame suggests.

Earlier I suggested that narcissism involves a belief in the presence of the self inside the other, and that this is a basic form of the symbolic process. The corollary, of course, is that symbolization is also about the presence of

the object in the self. The symbolic process is precisely this activity of interchange, and it creates a situation which the psychoanalyst Lacan has likened to a Moebius strip: each face can be clearly differentiated from the other at any point on the band, but their respective boundaries are indistinguishable. Neither side A nor side B has a different beginning or end. But we must not try to turn this into a mystical or quasi-logical paradox. No identity between subject and object is involved, no synthesis of the particular and the general in the "concrete universal" need be entertained, and no hypothesis about a symmetrical mode of being is required. If the symbolic process is a kind of friction between drive, sense, cognition, affect, memory, and so on, all of these are defined with reference to their objects, and there is no contradiction in that. The only ontological assumption we need is that the human being is an unusually intelligent physical organism in a physical environment-- and we try to take it from there.

Marion Milner (1950, 152) states:

[T]he child has a fantasy of containing the parents inside him, in some sort of relationship, and a relationship which the child seeks to feel he or she can control omnipotently; and this phantasy serves as part of the child's way of coming to deal with the painful fact of recognising an actual dependence upon the real parents. But this phantasy is not only intimately connected with masturbation, it also seems to serve as the child's pre-verbal symbol for thinking about its own creative capacities....¹⁸

The child is inside the object and the object is inside the child-- but it would be a mistake to think of this as a subjective state of homogeneity in which there is no tension between the child and the object. On the contrary, the child perceives the object, but what the child does with that perception is to turn itself into a person, that is, to become its own container, at least in fantasy, by getting inside the internal world of the external world and controlling it, and taking the environment inside the self, as its own content. Every child becomes its own parents through food, excrement, genital penetration and engulfment, limbs, eyes, ears, nose and throat. There is no other way to become a person. Cultures and social systems have an enormous influence on the way in which persons become persons (Schweder & Levine), but they are not responsible for personhood itself, only its variations. There are cultures which do very well without individuals, political enfranchisements, legal definitions, rights, and the like; but none without the symbolic process, where insides get inside other insides and turn themselves and each other into persons.

Kenneth Burke (1945) once said that "whenever we find a distinction between the internal and the external, the intrinsic and the extrinsic, the within and the without... we can expect to encounter the paradoxes of substance" (47). The philosophical concept of substance, according to Burke, is inherently ambiguous in precisely the way that verbal definition is antinomial. In order to establish the meaning

of a word, we must resort to other words, and in order to say what a thing is, in its "essence," we must go beyond the thing itself: "the word substance, used to designate what a thing is, derives from a word designating something that it is not.... [T]hough used to designate something within the thing, intrinsic to it, the word etymologically refers to something outside the thing, extrinsic to it" (1945, 23). That is, the word 'substance', especially in its European philosophical sense, refers to the essence of a thing which underlies or "cradles" its attributes (or "accidents"). What a thing is may be determined, as in Cartesian philosophy, by a catalogue of its qualities (primary and secondary), but these qualities are in themselves nothing but percepts; in order to become the thing that they would be, they must inhere in the thing itself-- in an element other than its attributes, "standing under" them, in the supportive role of sub-stance, or "ground" (to use Heidegger's word). But there is no thing in itself-- or at least, there is no reason really to look for one. The logical absurdity of substances is just the nature of the symbolic process: there may be laws of language which conform to logic, but (as I shall maintain) there are probably none, or very few, for meaning. The quality of the semantic is an emergent property of intelligent beings fantasizing about each other and the world.

Notes to Chapter One

1.E.g. Freud 1940 [1938], 169: "It remains for us to give a dynamic explanation of why the sleeping ego takes on the task of the dream-work at all."

2.George Klein (1976, 251) states: "To say that a meaning is being lived out 'unconsciously' can only mean that comprehension of the leading element of a schema is lacking.... What is lacking is self-relatedness..., responsiveness to feedback that would lead to experiencing the meaning of the behavior.... Although living out a meaning always takes place through modes of experiences-- that is, encounters and products of thinking-- these experiences may [fail to] include comprehension of their meaning."

3.Cf. Schur (1966, p.111): "Metapsychological formulations should not be restricted to supporting any one of the metapsychological points of view. It is one of the "beauties" of the metapsychological points of view that they complement each other so meaningfully."

4.Hanna Segal (1964, 75): "At this point the genesis of symbol formation can be seen. In order to spare the object, the infant partly inhibits his instincts and partly displaces them on to substitutes-- the beginning of symbol formation. The processes of sublimation and symbol formation are closely linked and are both the outcome of conflicts and anxieties pertaining to the depressive position."

Like Anna Freud's, Klein's model of symbolization is also built around the concept of repression, because it is only when "neurotic" repression replaces the more primitive "psychotic" defences of the paranoid schizoid position, such as splitting and projective identification, that symbolization is thought to emerge. Yet there is much in Klein, some of which has been brought out by Bion, to suggest that splitting and projective identification, together with incorporation and introjection, are indispensable constituents of the symbolic process.

5.For this reason, I view Bion's (1962, 42-6) recommendations for a notational system of affects as misleading, not because it oversimplifies, but because it forces the analyst to decide too quickly what the patient is up to, before the analyst's unconscious has had a chance to work through the multivalent structure of the patient's feelings. According to Bion, the analyst ought to summarize sessional material about relationships in terms of whether the patient L=loves, H=hates, or K=knows the object.

6.This is not just a feature of emotional life-- it includes even propositional activities. When the patient says "I believe" or "I know for a fact," the possibility that he may in reality not believe or not know does not necessarily make the patient a liar.

7.Matte Blanco himself makes this point on p.120.

8.Matte Blanco's use of the language of set theory and symbolic logic often gives the impression of being superimposed on the familiar psychoanalytic methods of explanation and interpretation, rather than replacing them, as in the following example: "'Symmetrical thinking' appears every time that bivalent logic is not capable of preventing its pressure from making itself visible and this is due to various causes. When this situation occurs, symmetrical thinking breaks out." Clearly, the terms 'symmetrical thinking' and 'bivalent logic' have been substituted for 'primary process' and 'secondary process' respectively, without any appreciable gain in meaning. The same is true of Matte Blanco's use of clinical material. It successfully illustrates the applicability of the new terminology, but never demonstrates an understanding or interpretation of the material that would not have been reached anyway, by the traditional methods.

9.If female hungry people cannot be distinguished from male hungry people within the set of hungry people, then the set of hungry people cannot be distinguished from the set of female people, since the existence of one common member establishes a bi-univocal correspondence between all the members of both sets-- because the common member is by definition identical to the members of each set. The system ucs would therefore necessarily consist of only one thing: a "homogeneous indivisible totality" (366), or in other words, nothing.

10.Although Marshall Edelson's (1975, 69ff.) concern (unlike ours) is to expound the idea of a grammar or set of generative 'rules' governing the production of language, dream, play, symbol, symptom, and defense, as well as poetry and music (cf. Lakoff 1978), Edelson (30-61) also emphasizes, as do we, the ad hoc, particularistic, ex post facto, context-bound quality of semantic phenomena, and of their interpretation.

11.But not in the sense that Bion (1970, p.89) suggests of a "mathematics of at-one-ment," or "geometry of analogy."

12.My genial spirits fail;

And what can these avail

To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?

It were a vein endeavour

Though I should gaze for ever

On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win

The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

13. See also Oatley (1978) for a discussion of the independent dynamic character of emergent properties in systems, living and nonliving, and for a theory of mind and symbolic process as an emergent property "of inter-relations of biochemical and neural events," argued from the point of view of artificial intelligence models of thinking.

14. On the psychoanalysis of circadian rhythms, I refer the reader to Scott's Remembering Sleep and Dreams (1975) which offers among its many treasures a valuable enrichment of Freud's concept of 'wish.'

15. Bion (1962, 31-37). A useful discussion of Bion's concept of reverie may be found in Isaacs Elmhirst (1981). On Bion generally, see Eigen (1985).

In considering the positive role of projective identification in early development, Bion placed great emphasis on what he called the mother's "reverie." In comparing the disturbed patient to an infant at the breast, and the analyst's psychic process to the mother's reverie, Bion stated: "Projective identification makes it possible for [the patient] to investigate his own feelings in a personality powerful enough to contain them" (1967, 97-8). These ideas were spelled out in greater detail in Learning from Experience (1962), where Bion states (90-1): "Melanie Klein has described an aspect of projective identification concerned with the modification of infantile fears; the infant projects a part of the psyche, namely its bad feelings, into a good breast. Thence in due course they are removed and re-introjected. During their sojourn in the good breast they are felt to have been modified in such a way that the object that is re-introjected has become tolerable to the infant's psyche.... From the above theory I shall abstract...the idea of a container into which an object is projected and the object that can be projected into the container: the latter I shall designate by the term contained....The activity... shared by two individuals becomes introjected by the infant so that the [container-contained] apparatus becomes installed in the infant as part of the apparatus of alpha function."

The latter reference to 'alpha function' belongs to another (in this case, important) part of Bion's elaborate and largely unnecessary terminology. Alpha function refers to psychic-integration generally and to the capacity for mentalization, which is a broader category than the ego-syntonic. Bion conceives neonatal psychic life as comprised of a kind of catastrophic raw material which he called "beta elements." His assumption seems to be that early cognitive processing is too primitive for anything but bizarre

psychotic objects to catch the infant's attention. These beta elements are processed by alpha function into basic alpha elements-- the elements of thinkable thoughts, such as the dreamwork, signs, symbols, and the components of myth. Developed alpha function is largely borrowed by introjection from the parental function, which from this point of view is that of a 'container', or what the American analysts call a "surrogate ego." The significance of these Kleinian considerations is that they establish projective identification, essentially a defence mechanism, as a rudimentary psychic process, and they identify the process with semantization, or meaning, and meaning with object-relation.

For further discussion, see Chapter Five.

16. The sheer psychosomatic intensity of the symbolic process, understood as an elaboration of projective identification, is especially evident in the treatment setting where the transference has been permitted to evolve. See for example Casement's (1985, 155-167) impressive description of a therapeutic sequence.

17. The concept of oscillating rhythm as an emergent property of living and non-living systems in interaction with an environment, and consequently, by extension, as an emergent property of mind, is discussed by Oatley (1978, 111-36). The possibility that some notion of oscillation may throw light on the libidinal and aggressive phases of instinctual drive activity is explored by Scott (1954), in a brilliant but neglected paper. The type of rapid, virtually undetectable oscillation ascribed by Scott to the paranoid position is reminiscent of the 'noise' created by unsyncopated feedback in electronic systems. He states: "In dream theory we have often seen the usefulness of the concept of love and hate hallucinations present together not in a fused form but as rapidly oscillating. The rate of oscillation is important.... I am assuming that the period of oscillation must be reduced to the region of 1/10 - 1/100 second before the elements begin to be consciously discriminated. As the speed slows the patient becomes conscious not only of what we have long called ambivalence, but also of the relationship of the elements of the ambivalence.

"What is often seen in analysis is... the patient in whom action is impossible because impulses oscillate so rapidly that action is impossible. Only when oscillation slows to some extent is action possible" (236-7).

18. Milner continues (153): "Clinical material suggests that the symbols used for thinking about the creative process in oneself are derived, variously, from the stages of interest in different aspects of bodily experience. It might be possible to work out in detail the kinds of symbols used at the different stages of development. Such a scheme would

have to take into account, for instance, the stage at which to open one's eyes was felt to be a fiat of creation, a saying 'let there be light', which resulted in there being light; or the time when to open one's mouth was to create the nipple that filled it; or the time when the opening of one's bowels was not distinguished from the opening of one's eyes, so one really did believe one's faeces were the same as the world one saw, one felt oneself to be a dancing Siva creating the world; or the time when to masturbate was to create a heaven (or a hell) with the dance of one's limbs. For there seems to have been a time when even the faculty of consciousness itself was felt to be entirely creative, to be aware of anything was simply to have made it...."

Following Ferenczi (1913), Milner assumes i) that symbolization is derived from primitive proprioception, and ii) that symbolization emerges as a sublimation and substitute for an original state in which the body was identical with the world. This position has been widely adopted in the psychoanalytic schools, but as we shall see, it is both contradictory and counterfactual. In the symbolic process, there is a continuous strand spinning off from proprioception, but the semantic elaboration of the latter presupposes a differential interactive perceptual encounter with the environment-- otherwise the kind of symbolic analogizing of body and world discussed by Ferenczi and Milner could not occur. Logically, semantically realized experience, i.e., the symbolic process, cannot be entirely independent of differential perceptual input; and scientifically, it has become increasingly doubtful (see Chapters Five through Seven) that the postnatal human organism fails to have some important cognitive experiences of the separateness and contingency of its existence.

CHAPTER TWO

A TWIST OF THE LINGUISTIC TURN: PART ONE

Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language (Wittgenstein 1967, #55).

Things had essences for Aristotle, but only linguistic forms have meanings. Meaning is what essence becomes when it is divorced from the object of reference and wedded to the word (Quine 1951).

In a treatise on symbolization, one would normally expect a discussion on language theory to be central, but here it is a digression which may be skipped over by those unconcerned by the arguments of linguistic philosophers. My purpose in the next two chapters is only to decenter the language paradigm, particularly in those areas of knowledge, philosophy and social science, which have traditionally pondered the problem of what it is like to be a human being.

Aristotle defined man as the rational animal and as zoon politikon, and these definitions still suffice to encapsulate current beliefs. In contrast to the pagan religions, philosophy has always emphasized the fact that human beings differ from other animals, especially in their capacity for ideas, whether these ideas issue from a spiritual or "higher" realm expressing itself in Reason, as Plato thought, or whether they are the product of association, consensus and agreement which take place in this world, as Locke believed. There is no doubt that rational thought, whether philosophical and scientific or practical and calculative, is more or less unique to human

being, so far as we know empirically on this earth; and it is generally accepted that the phenomenon of language offers a more precise and empirical framework for the study of what the classical philosophers were in the habit of calling Reason. But it does not follow from this that language-- anymore than Reason-- is anthropogenetic. The belief that what makes human beings seem different from other animals also constitutes the essence, ground, or explanation of human life, collective or individual, is based on a logical fallacy which deserves to be challenged. The Saussurian observation that the identity of linguistic units lies in their diacritical difference cannot be generalized to organic species, cultures, or psyches.

The perspective from which I shall develop this point is not that of evolutionary biology, ethology, or teaching chimpanzees to use conventional signs by means of positive reinforcement. Although I am in sympathy with those who are suspicious of the celebration of language as an evolutionary status symbol¹ (just as language philosophers today are suspicious of Reason as a spiritual status symbol), I shall avoid reductionism at least to the extent of ascribing to the capacity for symbolization a central role in human experience. I assume that a theory of the symbolic process is essential to an adequate account of what it is that constitutes a person; but I shall attempt to wrestle this twentieth century prejudice away from the exclusive control of the language theorists, and their systematic

philosophies, in order to set it out in the very different terms outlined in the previous chapter.

The vast majority of contemporary approaches to the problem of symbolization, whether developmentalist or structuralist, take it for granted that language acquisition is the essence and telos of the capacity to mean (see Chapter Eight). Even when it is conceded that one can mean without using language, it is still assumed that such forms of meaning are "prelinguistic" or "protolinguistic," in other words, to use a phrase of Heidegger's, they are "on the way to language." This misunderstanding was not discouraged by early psychoanalytic studies of "symbolism," which lumped various forms of psychic process together with mature speech, in a speculative phylogenetic sequence which was supposed to be recapitulated by each member of the species, in the same order, and according to the same logic of intrapsychic conflict with the environment. There was a tendency to view linguistic competence as an ego function derived-- not just partially, but directly-- from the sublimation of primitive symbolic thinking (Jones 1916). It is now generally agreed that language has its own ontogenetic pattern of development which is relatively independent of other lines of psychobiological development, including psychic conflict.

Sapir (1921) emphasized that there are no natural organs of speech: "speech is an overlaid function.... It gets what service it can out of organs and functions...that

have come into being and are maintained for very different ends than its own" (9). Whether or not one agrees with this, or with Chomsky's contention that language acquisition is underdetermined by environmental inputs and buffered by hard wiring in the brain, it is still fairly clear that language is not simply the continuation, at a higher level of organization, of other modes of interaction with the environment. There is no doubt that the ontogenesis of language retroactively modifies and subsumes our semantic experience, our modes of expression, and the quality of human interaction in general. But it is doubtful that the latter-- the child's playfulness, for example, or the infant's exchanges with its caretaker, or more generally what Piaget calls sensorimotor development-- can be understood as stepping stones in a linguistic teleology. Nor can it be assumed that the outcome of language acquisition is narrowly contingent upon variations within the average range of environmental input, or significantly correlated with variations in other lines of development (Bates, et al. 1982). The process of signifying through language is one thing, and the process of symbolization, for which I reserve the much broader term 'meaning', is another. Of course, the two processes necessarily overlap, and they continually draw upon one another for sustenance, but I have chosen to isolate the more general problem of meaning from the formal knowledge we may possess of signification, in order to examine it afresh.

Modern social thought was conceived in debates (those of Socrates, for example) about how agreement (or compliance) can or should be achieved on a collective basis: in various theories of the social contract. From the philosopher king to the general will, the problematic of social philosophy has been consensus, agreement, validity--or the lack thereof. For a brief time in the post-Enlightenment period, a new breed of holistic philosophers like Herder, Hegel and Marx, together with the early sociologists, like Comte and Durkheim, sought to articulate an overarching principle of social cohesion, latent in the historical process, which would bypass the need for contract and consensus. They were really trying to answer the question that rationalist political philosophers have always begged: namely, what is the underlying basis for individual adherence to the rules and norms which constitute the social consensus or contract in the first place (Collins 1982)? Herder and Hegel referred to the organic spirit of a culture or the cunning of reason in History, Marx and Spencer applied the logic of material evolution, St. Simon and Comte wrote in terms of stages of social development, and Durkheim appealed to collective representations and totems.

For social theorists of the present age, language is not only the paradigm of social cohesion and cultural activity; it offers a number of practical advantages to the student of human society: it has a discrete quality, which makes its presence easily identifiable and verifiable; it

can be witnessed, recorded, read, reproduced, codified, formalized. You can study it in the field, and then study it again in the ivory tower. Even those philosophers and social theorists who suggest that the most important property of language is that it introduces chaos and indeterminacy into human affairs base their arguments on those features of language which make it empirically accessible and susceptible to formalization: the fact that it is made up of conventional signs whose identity can be agreed upon, especially when written down or printed up; and the fact that these signs, or signifiers, can be arranged in space and clearly differentiated from each other in the visual, if not always the auditory field. Although it is true that much of the contemporary discussion of the human situation has been focussed on quandaries about whether signs and signifiers actually refer to anything external to language (i.e., by extension, to the nonhuman), and on whether there are truer or more desirable ways of arranging the components of language, these debates are quite secondary to the fact that there is general agreement on the ultimate existence of the analytic or formal properties of language and on their overriding importance for the proper study of mankind.

The linguistic revolution in contemporary social thought has been addressing traditional socio-political concerns with uncommon vigour, often with the aim of guiding us beyond them into new and exciting territories of modern (or postmodern) thought. But the language paradigm-- the

heralded engine of innovation in the humanities-- has been a disappointment. The reason for this, I think, is that the language paradigm, from a philosophical point of view, is largely an up-dated, methodologically more sophisticated, but essentially standard version of all the old intuitions which have informed our thinking about Reason, the Individual, and the Collectivity for many centuries-- intuitions which are either substantially incorrect, or else overly biased, in the interests of formalizability and dissemination, in the direction of either logic or signification or both, at the expense of meaning, experience, and bodily perception. Broadly speaking, the language paradigm attempts to synthesize the contractualist perspective of the classical Rationalists and Empiricists with the new sociologic emphasis on collective bonding and organic holism typical of post-Enlightenment thinking in early industrial society.²

Recently, the philosopher Richard Rorty has made a related kind of argument about the abiding patterns of secularized idealism in Western thought-- but in behalf rather than in doubt of the language revolution that has swept the universities (Rorty 1967; 1979; 1982). His account is drawn, in part, from the insights of pragmatists, such as Dewey, linguistic ontologists, such as Heidegger, and poststructuralists or deconstructionists, such as Foucault and Derrida. In one way or another, as Rorty makes clear, all of these thinkers want to tie our conception of the world and what we can know or think about it to the

language we use, and to the agreements or tacit assumptions that we make about how to use and interpret it. Rorty's contribution is to distill the various currents of contemporary philosophy down to this essential insight: that "there is no way to think about either the world or our purposes except by using our language," because "our knowledge is limited by the language we speak" (1982, xix, xxxvi). Of course, instruments of knowledge other than language have been considered in the past, instruments such as observation and intuition, but in Rorty's view these have been discredited. As the logical positivists originally insisted, the value of observation lies in the credibility of the language into which it is translated; but the ideal of a neutral observation language is unattainable. As for intuition, this is actually something that we should be trying to suppress, particularly the intuition that "language does not go all the way down" (1982, xxx). In principle, no intuition can tell us anything significant about ourselves that language hasn't already articulated, because "an intuition is nothing more than familiarity with a language-game" (1979, 34).

At the end of his famous Tractatus, Wittgenstein (1922) issued an influential but enigmatic statement on this matter: "There is indeed the inexpressible," he said. "This shows itself; it is the mystical." But he added: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (187-89).

The spirit of this pronouncement has been interpreted

in a variety of ways, which for convenience's sake may be grouped into three standard arguments-- three types of claim for the philosophical importance of language. I shall call them the weak (positivistic), the moderate (relativistic), and the strong (absolute) versions of the language paradigm. This way of ordering the doctrines reflects the increasing demand in this century for philosophical attention to language as an epistemological and ontological priority.

The weak claim for language, which emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, is referential and representational: we must heed language first, because we need to establish that the language we are using is actually about something, that it denotes. At this stage of the linguistic turn, it is still the object of language which is important. The moderate claim is not so sure about this. By the 1930's, though belief in the efficacy of logical analysis and systematicity never waned, there was a gradual shift of attention away from extensional reference toward intensional meaning, or signification, based on a growing sense of a gulf between the two types of "semantics" (which the verification theory of meaning had attempted to hold together). The capacity of language to serve as a clarifying instrument, not only with regard to the world, but in respect of itself, began to suffer somewhat. Quine (1951) argued that the attempt to be analytic about meaning was no less speculative, and just as metaphysical, as previous philosophy. "Once the theory of meaning is sharply

separated from the theory of reference, it is a short step to recognizing as the primary business of the theory of meaning simply the synonymy of linguistic forms and the analyticity of statements; meanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned" (22).

Unfortunately, as Quine himself pointed out, the criteria for analyticity and synonymy remain formally indefinable. By the time we get to the strong position, the field has been reversed: language is not referential or representational-- there is no way to determine ultimately what it is about. This does not necessarily mean that we know what language is either; it just means that there is nothing else to talk about. What remains consistent, however, throughout the entire enterprise, from the logical empiricists to the deconstructionists, is the presupposition that meaning has something to do with language, its components, structures, or rules.

The weak claim corresponds more or less to the position Wittgenstein himself occupied when he wrote the Tractatus, namely that we can know the world as it objectively is through the instrument of language itself, if only we understand sufficiently the properties and rules of language, study them carefully enough, and learn to use them in an appropriate and scientifically rigorous way. There have been many refinements and modifications of this view since its original elaboration in terms of logical structures and ideal languages by the Vienna School. As

Munitz (1981) has argued, the main idea was to break away from "subject-object dualism" and to replace it with "issues of a logico-linguistic sort" in order to achieve "clarity of linguistic meaning" (5,4,8). According to Ayer (1946, 52-57), and more recently Davidson (1987, 166), even the "great philosophers" of the past, such as Plato, Aristotle, Hume, and Kant, were not really concerned with the nature of objects, but "with the way in which we speak about them"-- "the study of the general structure of language."

The moderate version of the language paradigm is closer to the position Wittgenstein evolved in his later writings, particularly the Investigations. It is generally characterized by the more Kantian idea that whatever it is that does exist, it can only be known in the forms which our language allows us to perceive it, or into which it is naturally shaped by language. In this connection, Wittgenstein spoke of "forms of life." He always retained a somewhat mystical but simultaneously concretistic conception of language, comparing it to games of chess and tool boxes, but in his later writings, he was more concerned by the problem of how language represents itself, than of how it represents the world. The proponents of the moderate position generally agree with the positivists and the analytic philosophers that there is something other than language, something to which language may even vaguely allude; but they are not inclined to be such realists about this non-linguistic dimension of our experience, nor do they evince much faith

in the prospects for honing ordinary language down to a syntax or semantics capable of reproducing it (whether by cranking truth out logically, or by achieving an objective correspondence to it). On the other hand, the moderates are likely to have much more confidence in the efficacy of "ordinary language," either because they think it already has a deep structure adequate to our purposes, or because it has always proved sufficiently flexible and adaptive.³ This general type of orientation is best represented by the more objectively-minded structuralists, such as the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, the culturalist epistemologists like Peter Winch (1958) or Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956), the post-Wittgensteinian analytic philosophers, like Austin, Rorty and Quine, and also by the work of Ernst Cassirer.

Finally, there is the strong version of the language paradigm, which makes no claims to scientific status whatsoever, and tends to cast doubt on any programme for objective knowledge. It may be characterized as a metaphysical monism, but under the general modern influence of Hegel, it has become a monism unfolding in time, respectful of the prodigious powers of variegation evinced by temporal beings. There is sometimes the sense that the language paradigm is returning to the form of Ursprungsphilosophie: the substance, or essential form of reality, produces its own objects, whose differentiations, refinements, and history can all be traced back to the forms and movements of the potentiating substance itself-- which is a kind of

Boehmean "Ungrund," intuited through absences revealed only by the interplay of identity and difference in language. In such concepts as metonymic desire and differance, contemporary linguistic models of the universe make a direct appeal to Nietzsche's Will to Power (rather than Hegel's Spirit), thus giving Heidegger's concept of Being a Heraclitean twist (see Chapter Four). It is as if thought and culture are, so to speak, 'redshifting' through a kind of limitless linguistic space, entropically elaborating the semantic 'big bang.' This does not necessarily mean that language as we know it is supposed, in the strong version, to be the essence of reality, but rather that language, speech, signifiers, sentences, meaning, and so on, constitute the privileged, though enigmatic, surface of some primordial, paradoxical, and fluctuating activity, which differs from itself, defers itself, traces itself, and turns in upon itself in "hymen"-like abysses, spinning off what we call speech, consciousness, presence and perception (Deleuze 1969; Derrida 1967b, 1972b). Here, the impl' + mysticisms of the weak and the strong positions converge in a sobering thought which is foreign to the bland plausibility of mainstream language philosophy: that meaning is not nearly so ordinary, automatic, pragmatic or socially guaranteed as we may wish to believe: it emerges in language through some inexplicable expense of effort and attention, in spite of all the rules, habits, and conventions of verbal signification that are supposed to be smoothly governing our relation to the world.

One might characterize the strong claim for the language paradigm as a generalization of the aporetic situation which Kant reserved only for those who grapple with the antinomies of pure reason alone. There are hints of this in the analytic tradition, especially in Quine, with his doctrines of "ontological relativity," "indeterminacy of translation" and "inscrutability of reference"; but at its most pristine, particularly in some of the writings of Jacques Derrida, this form of pan-linguism has the uncanny quality of a pure reflection on the conceptual dilemmas of being and nothingness, presence and absence, origin and end, and on the Zeno-esque impossibility, yet indispensability, of points in time and points in space. Like good religions, both the strong and the weak versions of the language paradigm remind us of our powerlessness to prevent these problems from surfacing in every attempt to say anything about the world at all.

Within this general pattern of ideas, it is evident that the stronger the claim for language as the philosopher's stone, the greater the complaint against any traditional or simple notion of Truth. This is the basis of Korta's plea for language, and his indictment of the philosophical tradition, which he characterizes as a naive realist faith in the mind as a "mirror of nature." There can be no Truth, because our knowledge is no better than the "conversation" we are able to have about it. Whether the importance of this conversation lies in the fact that it

reflects the level of our understanding, or actually constitutes it, is never quite clear. Nor is it easy to determine whether Rorty thinks that the conversation gets better, as time goes on. On occasion, he sounds a bit like the early Vienna circle, and speaks of a "bad" language, full of dialectical impasses, in contrast to language games "which will not lead to such impasses" (1982, xxxvi). In such passages, Rorty echoes Quine (1951), who argued that although scientific "polits" may be epistemologically "comparable to the Gods of Homer," they are at least better in the sense that they have "proved more efficacious than other myths as... device[s] for working a manageable structure into the flux of experience" (44). This kind of pragmatist talk suggests that the "conversation" can improve, which implies that the way we use language reflects something (in the glassy essence of the mind)-- perhaps some knowledge against which the validity of language games can be measured. But at other times, Rorty sounds like a skeptical adherent of the strong position, who believes that all of our knowledge is an illusion constituted by language.

These ambiguities are not, however, fundamental to Rorty's message. What counts for him is that Truth is a metaphysical concept, not a scientific one, and that philosophy has no authority to legislate Truth on scientists, or anyone else. In this, Rorty has a strong case. What is not so clear is why his indictment of Truth should necessitate a "shift from talk of objects to talk of

words" (1967, 11). Truth in the strong sense that Rorty means it-- as something that philosophers think they can determine for other people-- is not, as he sometimes implies, a uniform feature of traditional philosophy; at any rate, it is certainly not a notion that only linguistic pragmatists like himself have been able to criticize. Absolute scientific truth is the obsession of philosophers who want not only to be scientific, but to revive the original status of philosophy with regard to practical knowledge. However, this legislative status within the academic hierarchy originally had little to do with experimental science; it had to do with the conduct of life. The ancestors of Locke, Kant, and the logical positivists were people who were more concerned with the correct forms of language, literature and art than with objective truth. They did not care whether Galileo was right so much as whether what he said in public was appropriate or "fitting."

The concept of a scientifically objective type of Truth, independent of the will of Man or God, came into its own in the Seventeenth Century and reached its peak in the early twentieth century, when philosophers like Frege began to argue that the epistemological Archimedian point must be language itself, if only its ethereal house could be put in order. Once this scientific-linguistic version of the mind as a mirror of nature is instituted, however, it quickly breaks up into a series of increasingly skeptical sociological or formalist accounts of the knower's relation to the

world (and the self). What we wind up with is precisely the problem that Rorty gives us: the problem of how to agree on terms of reference, and of how to come to a rational consensus-- i.e., the traditional problems of Rhetoric and Social Order. But there is no reason to think that this constitutes a new paradigm, or that it (dis)solves the question of Truth, as Rorty claims.

The old concept of Truth was settled long ago, in precisely the way that Rorty recommends it should be now: on an ad hoc basis, through the "conversation of mankind," by means of persuasion, political power, and consensus. This was always something that philosophers could safely generalize about, without risking their considerable influence. The problem of scientific truth, however, is historically new, and constitutes quite a different issue, which is hardly addressed by the spectacle of the philosopher claiming through some special knowledge of language either to know what truth is or to prove that it doesn't exist. As Rorty argues, philosophy has not gained from the pretense that "social practices of justification [are] more than just such practices" (1979, 390). But if we grant this argument, there seems to be no reason (apart from the currently popular equation between social practices and language) why 'words' themselves should be endowed with an epistemological status superior to 'objects,' or Quine's 'Gods of Homer.'

For all its claims to novelty, the linguistic turn is rooted in old civilized intuitions rather than new know-

ledge. The most basic of these old intuitions is probably the belief that Man is distinguished by his Reason. We no longer say that Reason is embodied in a unique faculty of mind, or that it is noumenal, or God-given; but we do say that everybody has to learn a language in order to become a part of his political community, that rationality is embodied in the way we use language, and that this is what distinguishes human culture and society from "nature."

Another of the old intuitions is that Reason is Universal. Of course, we are no longer inclined to credit this notion either, but we do say that the subjective individual is a product of his objective culture, which is widely believed to be rooted in the native language. As Quine says, all our "posits," scientific or no, are "cultural posits" (44). Whether we believe that all languages can be reconciled in a universal propositional logic (Wittgenstein, 1922), or whether we believe that reference is inscrutable and paradigms are incommensurable (Kuhn, 1962) doesn't matter; nor does it make much difference, at the level of our deepest assumptions, whether we believe that we have discovered the laws of discourse which determine the ideologies and epistemes of epochs (Foucault, 1970), or whether we believe that all languages are in a state of flux, endlessly reproducing an inevitable failure of transcendence (Derrida, 1968). None of these variations on the linguistic turn really matters because we all accept without question that, in one way or another, and

in the final analysis, it is language which determines our experience-- that language is something larger than us, perhaps a system or a structure, which instantiates our common being.

Rudolf Carnap (1950) defined the prejudicial core of linguistic philosophy when he explained that "to be real in the scientific sense means to be an element of the system" (73). This is really a statement about naming, about the problem of whether or not to adopt a certain vocabulary. Carnap goes on to say that the concept of the real "cannot be meaningfully applied to the system itself," since the system which contains and determines the elements is of a higher logical type, and thus cannot be said to contain itself as a real element. For example, the perennial question about the reality of the world of objects and events is really a question about the whole of our language concerning objects and events. It is not answerable in terms of the epistemological and ontological status of the entities to which our vocabulary of objects and events refers. But the problem can be solved in a pragmatic way, by translating it into a "practical decision concerning the structure of our language." The decision we make about the reality of 'x' is really a decision about whether or not it is advisable to use the language in which 'x' appears as a term. This decision is "external" to the language itself and, consequently, of a different logical order, which cannot be settled in the same, determinate way as questions

pertaining to the "internal" order of language.

Like Quine, and in one way or another, like the rest of the proponents of the language paradigm, Carnap is quite convinced that he can make a distinction between matters internal to language, and matters external (i.e., the distinction between meaning and reference);⁴ and that on the basis of the ability to make this distinction, he can make judgments about what is real or probable and what is fictional, problematic, mythical, metaphysical, undecidable (or, in Heideggerian language, ontotheological, logocentric, or phallogocentric). Carnap has his own particular theory about how to do this, which is a modification of empirical method. He says that

To recognize something as a real thing or event means to succeed in incorporating it into the system of things at a particular space-time position so that it fits together with the other things recognized as real, according to the rules of the framework.⁵

If we wish to determine the "reality" of the referent of a particular term, in order to decide whether to include it within the "framework" of the language we are using, then we should (or do) use certain methods for evaluating observations which Carnap feels are susceptible to "rational reconstruction." Another philosopher might recommend stricter criteria of consistency, but the point would be the same. There is a system which we either adopt or not, holus bolus. If we adopt it, then we have at our disposal (either automatically or in principle, by virtue of habit and

convention or by virtue of logical explication and self-conscious adherence to rules) a means for determining what belongs to the system, how it fits in, and what can be done with it. In other words, everything is settled, so long as the system, on grounds of expediency or necessity, is kept in place.

Carnap's strategy of separating questions internal to language from questions external to it is more plausible when it is framed in terms of the discussion of mathematical systems than it is in terms of language itself. The problem for the linguistic philosopher who wants to be an epistemologist is that the powers of language that he wishes to exploit-- its powers of abstraction-- are not nearly as orderly and codifiable as the systems of notation and calculation available to mathematicians, technologists, and natural scientists. It doesn't matter as much to a mathematician as to a language user whether the marks he puts on paper refer to independent entities external to the system of marks, or whether the rules according to which he organizes the marks into visible sequences apply in some descriptive fashion to the rest of the world, like laws or structures of nature or mind. Mathematical language is sufficiently abstract and self-contained that the meaning of the term '5' can be settled to most people's satisfaction without raising the question of what it refers to. This is because the "rules" for combining numbers can accomodate expressions in which terms standing for any possible number,

'5' or '5 billion,' have an assignable function and a predictable outcome. The rules always work, and this is because the structure of mathematics is such that numbers are fungible: one term can be substituted for another, ad infinitum, without changing the conceptual order or logical type of the result when the same rules are applied. This is not the case with language. There is little reason to doubt that language is a basic method of abstraction (it would be difficult to imagine mathematics or logic without the potential for logical and quantitative formalization latent in natural language). But language is not as capable of abstraction and formalization as mathematics or bivalent logic, because it is not just a system or structure of relations between variables. It is, of course, possible to substitute one "signifier" for another, but there are no known "rules" for holding the relations between linguistic markers constant. The rules of grammar do determine, to some extent, what we mean when we apply them, but not as much as the rules of logic or the rules governing a number system. The fact that grammatical rules may be more rigid than mathematical rules about sequential order only testifies to the relative ineffectuality of the systematic element in language, for grammatical rules are not nearly as comprehensive about what they compel us to do with the order they impose.

If language is systematic and internally consistent--that is, if there are substantive philosophical questions

which are, as Carnap thinks, purely internal to language-- this would have to be true in a very different sense than the way in which it is functionally valid for mathematics. To say that one knows what is purely internal to language is to say, in effect, that one knows what the "whole" of language is and where its boundaries lie. The view, attributed to Saussure (1915, 22-3; 107) by every structuralist (and also held by Frege), that the meaning of a sign derives from the whole system of differences by means of which a "system of signs," or 'langue,' carves up the world, is one such claim. Carnap's belief in the existence of a "thing language with its framework for things" (in which every term has an assigned "position"), is another. But there is no such thing as a "position" within a language. If there were, we would have to be able to conceptualize the whole structure of language, and we would need a fixed system of linguistic coordinates to map it; moreover, we would need to find something in language like a functional concept of infinity, a place holder (with a formal, internally generated definition) for all the outcomes of the indefinite variety of linguistic operations which cannot be practically itemized. In short, the notion of a linguistic 'system,' as defined after the manner of Saussure and Carnap-- as a relational structure of positions-- is unworkable, and probably hostile to the actuality of language in principle. As Harris (1980) has pointed out: "If the inventory of signs comprising a language system were

in principle indeterminate, either by reason of being indefinitely extendible or else because of the co-existence of conflicting ways of itemising the inventory, it would have no structure in the Saussurian sense; i.e., criteria external to the system would have to be brought in at some point in order to define the signs" (156).

There are any number of ways for a language user or a linguistic theorist to count something into a language. The same is not the case for mathematics. Mathematical infinity is a functionally integrated concept. It is internal to mathematics, has an axiomatic definition, and a function; it does not undermine the systematicity of mathematical operations. The concept of infinity in language theory potentially does. Linguistic infinity is a part of descriptive linguistic theory: it does not actually play a role in the way any given linguistic operation does what it does. Infinity in linguistics boils down to Chomsky's concept of generativity-- the postulate that a "deep grammar" is capable of producing an infinite number of syntactically correct sentences in a given language. In this sense, Chomsky was right to envision the internal structure of language as a finite set of rules for producing an infinite number of combinations. But the tempting analogy with mathematical formalism is misleading because the generative power of deep structure provides no internal means of deciding matters of linguistic function; it does not finally determine what is an acceptable sentence in a

natural language-- unless we arbitrarily limit the linguistic inventory.⁶ Davidson (1970) has very ingeniously attempted to do precisely this, by defining the problem of semantics exclusively in terms of truth function. This enables him to conceive the possibility of "giving the truth conditions of all sentences" by means of "devices a finite number of which suffice for every sentence" (61).⁷ But even if Davidson's proposals could be brought to fruition, they would not lend much substance to the concept of a "linguistic system" because knowledge of, or application of, the system rules (whether confined solely to the truth or falsity of sentences, as Davidson stipulates, or not) could never account, even in principle, for everything a language is capable of doing. If there are indeed rules of language, their violation does not inevitably lead to a break down of linguistic exchange, whereas in logic and mathematics, rules really count as rules: there is a system which cannot function without them (cf. Wittgenstein 1958, 38-9, #80-4; 1967, 59, #320).⁸

What characterizes the proponents of the language paradigm is not their sensitivity to meaning, which they share with many others, but the peculiar wish to make language be or do something it cannot; or failing that, the wish to make what language actually does seem more systematic or structured or rule-governed than it really is. The difference between what mathematicians do and what language philosophers do is exemplified in the fact that

mathematicians would never call the names for functions, such as the multiplication sign, numbers. They have a fairly orderly metalanguage. But linguistic philosophers cannot afford such a consistent metalanguage: it would be too restrictive and self-contradictory. From Carnap to Derrida, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives all count as 'words,' or worse, as 'signifiers;' and no matter how subtle and legitimate the distinctions between words they draw, at the level of the general theory of language, the problems of 'words' or 'signifiers' are regularly discussed as if they were noun-like, names for things which can be substituted one for another on a syntactic grid. After two thousand years, it has proven impossible to get rid of the general term 'word,' though everyone understands perfectly well that individual words are never the same sort of thing when looked at from the inside (Wittgenstein 1958, 2, #1).⁹

The assumption that, in principle, linguistic terms are units in the same sense as numbers, and hence that they are subject to simple rules of substitution, in conformity with some governing pattern of relations embedded in the words themselves, is not exclusive to those who would devise ideal logical languages. It is just as much a feature of theories which deny the consistency of any language. To make language "work" to standards of abstraction more appropriate for mathematics, and to make it "play" by the same analogy, the same assumption is required: to wit, that meaning must be something we derive from the products of a methodological

reduction: meaning must have something to do with the logical relations, or perhaps random interactions, of formally bounded "elements" or "atoms" or "semantic simples" whose reality consists in their having the status of discrete units belonging to a combinatorial "system." Within the terms of the language paradigm, nobody can doubt that reality in the meaningful or operational sense is some sort of combination of discrete elements (even if it is just the empiricist's sense impressions), and that it is "like a language," i.e., in the image of language we acquire from formal education, through dictionaries, grammars, and mathematical texts, for deciphering and reproducing meaningful marks on paper according to various rules of combination.

Structuralism was, of course, the most ambitious attempt to apply this logic of writing to social thought in the spirit of scientific rationalism. It started more or less with Claude Levi-Strauss, who was inspired by Durkheim and Mauss and Saussure to propose that a culture is a "system of signs," and that a society can be studied by reducing it to a kind of table of constituent elements, or signifiers. As Goody (1977) has pointed out, once you have the ability to make a list-- to write words down-- you can begin to speculate about the order of the items on the list, and you can rearrange the elements in any way you like. If the list is sorted into two columns, you can create a system of oppositions with an uncanny power to summarize the underlying pattern of everything from a culture to the writings

of Melanie Klein. There are only two limitations on the ability of structural analysis to persuade: the credibility of the discrete units of analysis-- the elements or signifiers; and the validity of the rules by means of which they are recombined. Now, the units of structural analysis are almost always obtained by methodological reduction from the continuous to the discrete; and the rules of combination are usually extrinsic conventions of order and arrangement. But as Quine argued in his critiques of intensional logic, there is no way to get a language to do the work of knowing (or meaning) in a determinate way without first knowing what knowing is (Romanos 1983). To use the relations of a language as a demonstration of the mechanism of knowledge is not only to presume what the language is about; the procedure also presupposes the answer to the very question the demonstration is supposed to settle. Thus, committed scientific structuralists had two options with regard to the justification of their combinatorial models. They could try to claim that the rules by means of which they were defining the relations between the elements they had selected were like natural laws, e.g, the binary structure of mind or the structure of the unconscious; or they could dress them up with the sanctity of nomothetic logic, and slip into the positivist fallacy.

In Europe, there was a time when any claim to scientificity quickly got into a row with Heidegger, and this was what happened to structuralism. But structuralism,

in its confrontation with the likes of Derrida and Foucault, by no means lost the battle. It produced neostructuralism (otherwise known as post-structuralism), consisting of a variety of reactions against structuralist thought (and behind that, against positivism and phenomenology). Just as post-positivist philosophy has not abandoned the concept of an analytic language, neostructuralism has clung to the principle of reduction to ideal formal units of signification. Structuralism was even reinforced by neostructuralism to the extent that the latter made more explicit and popular the dependence of structural analysis on the analytic technology of the text. Thus, Heidegger was structuralized, and then deconstructed. He had been far too concretistic about language, and so his vague "continuist" notion of Being had to be redefined in terms of the structuralist model of discontinuous, discrete analytic elements interacting in a supraordinate system of relations, according to an indeterminate metaphysical pattern of play (Levin 1984). The metaphor of the primal "speech" of Being was transformed into a philosophy of writing and textuality. In turn, the analytic, formal model which structuralism had been trying to apply objectivistically to the world and its cultural history was extended, by means of a kind of projective identification, into Being itself-- in other words, the structural model became Being, and was then reintrojected, as Being writing itself. The significance of these views for the study of the symbolic process will be

discussed in the next chapter but one.

The history of structuralism, rich in analytic insights and structural permutations, illustrates one variation of the common Rationalist theme which informs the language paradigm and the linguistic turn in contemporary social thought. What links such a disparate group of thinkers-- Carnap, Rorty, Levi-Strauss, and Derrida-- under the rubric of rationalism is their adherence to the concept of an unconditioned conditioner: a model (whether it embodies the structure of mind, the structure of society, or the structure of language itself) which exists apart from or behind the phenomenal world and which organizes it into discrete relational units of intelligible reality. Carnap's basic vision is ultimately the same as Derrida's. Adherents of the weak position, such as the logical empiricists, may have believed that the phenomenal world is actually organized in the way that it comes to be represented in formal language (mind); and advocates of the strong position, such as the deconstructionists, may believe that the real world is inscrutable, and that the phenomenal world is only a reproduction of the categories of mind (language). But they are all Rationalists, because they all start from an analytic model-- the system which makes the elements real -- and derive the possibilities and forms of subjective experience from that. What makes them modern Rationalists is that the models they presuppose are much more closely tied to the empirical study of language than ever before.

Plato's Ideas were idealized abstractions of written forms--
signifiers-- whereas Carnap, Rorty, and Derrida think
directly through a more sophisticated, detailed
understanding of linguistic practice. They are conceptual
anthropologists, sociologists of signification, or even
scientific gadflies-- but only secretly First Philosophers.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. On this point, see David Premack's eloquent "Two Problems in Cognition" (1972). Premack argues that "symbolization... is too basic a process to have begun with language" and points out that "few practices contribute more to the sense of qualitative rather than quantitative difference [between man and animal] than that of contrasting the performance of any individual chimp with the whole of human culture." He argues against this procedure on the grounds that "it compares the immature chimp with the human adult" where "man is represented, not by the output of an individual in an experimental session, but by the cumulative glory of human culture" (52). "We have greatly oversold the uniqueness of man. True, we differ qualitatively from other organisms in the matter of language, but we differ only quantitatively in the general manner in which we process information. Symbolization, for example, is a more primitive mechanism than we have supposed. Though elaborated into richer forms by language, it is not dependent upon language. Its existence in at least rudimentary form can be shown in the chimpanzee, even perhaps in dogs..... We are indeed unique, but we do not know how" (58).

See also, Lock (1975) and Osgood in Rieber (1983).

2. For various perspectives on the relationship between linguistic formalization, philosophy, and civilization, see Baudrillard (1972, 1976), Diamond (1974), and Goody (1977). See also Levi-Strauss (1975) and Derrida (1967a).

3. Cf. e.g., Wittgenstein (1958, 45, #98): "On the one hand it is clear that every sentence in our language 'is in order as it is'. That is to say, we are not striving after an ideal, as if our ordinary vague sentences had not yet got a quite unexceptionable sense, and a perfect language awaited construction by us.-- On the other hand it seems clear that where there is sense there must be perfect order.--- So there must be perfect order even in the vaguest sentence."

4. Using the analogy of the game of chess, Saussure (1915, 22) makes the same distinction. See also Thiher (1984, 78).

5. Carnap, 73. Presumably, such a procedure does not fly in the face of Quantum Mechanics, since the latter does not, in principle, employ the same linguistic framework of objects and events as other empirical investigations.

6. That is to say, the deep grammar is an algorithm for distinguishing between grammatical and non grammatical sentences, but not for dividing "meaningful" from "meaningless" sentences (but cf. Katz [1971, 84-122]). The fact that Chomsky may very well be right that something like a deep grammar is part of the cognitive equipment of all

human beings has no bearing on the points being made here about the thinness of the relationship between language and meaning.

Katz (116) argues that "We should not look to base a theory of meaning on publically observable features of the environment, such as the things referred to in the use of language, the stimuli controlling verbal responses, or the conditions that determine the appropriate use of words, but instead look to base the theory on the same kind of underlying reality that our theory of deep structure in syntax is based on." This may be generally so. But why should we look, in specific, to a deep structure in language, as opposed to anything else? And granting that whatever it is may be "deep," why should we think of it as a structure?

The answer is that the philosophers are not really after meaning-- or anything that an individual speaker might experience; they want "ideal" meaning, or in other words, signification. As Katz explains: "It is crucial to make explicit that we do not take the grammar that linguists write for a natural language to be the description of what actual speakers have in their heads. Rather, we take grammars to be idealizations.... This [distinction] is particularly important at the semantic level.... Ideas, thoughts, cognitions, etc., like utterances, are performance phenomena, while meanings, like phonological features and syntactic categories, are abstractions that form part of competence" (120-1).

By 'meaning,' Katz means 'signification.' The substitution is preferable because Katz is concerned about whether the sentence 'shadows are waterproof' has a meaning. He says it does not; but of course it does; and one might even argue that it is true, i.e., that water indeed fails to soak through shadows. What Katz means by 'meaningless' is really 'without signification'. This is not a semantic but a formal determination, made on the basis of ideal criteria, which Katz spells out quite clearly.

So long as it is not smuggled back into psychology or social science (where formalistic exclusion devices are uninformative, and potentially dangerous if operationalized), the Chomskian distinction between performance and competence is a perfectly acceptable tool: it permits the philosopher to bracket the question of meaning (upon which positivism foundered), in order to set about the business of constructing an ideal model for the adjudication of significations: this is essentially what philosophers like Davidson or Kripke try to do in formal semantics. However, ideal models of signification are virtually useless in the study of symbolic process, except insofar as they give us some clue about the limitations of formal linguistics in the study of semantic phenomena (see Chapters Nine and Ten).

7. In order to be able to talk about the whole of language ("a potential infinity of sentences"), we must be able to specify its parts ("a finite stock of semantically significant atoms"), which in turn depends on some knowledge of the whole. The only way to go about this without being reduced to an endless taxonomy is to determine ad hoc what the whole of language is by postulating a restrictive operational principle-- an exclusion device-- conceived on the model of a mathematical "language" ("a finite number of applications of a finite number of rules of composition" [Davidson 1977, 202]) which will produce "formal definitions" of all (acceptable) semantic properties (Katz 1971). The procedure seems rather arbitrary, but so long as it is clearly defined as an approximation of "competence" in the functional use of "ordinary language"-- and not confused with "meaning"-- there is no reason why it should not be as revealing, in its own way, as was Chomsky's work on syntax.

8. It might be objected that linguistic function can continue in violation of the rules, for example the rules of grammar, or the rules of truthfulness, or of comprehensibility, only because extralinguistic factors have been brought in to save the day-- in other words, it might be claimed that this does not have any bearing on the constitutive status of the rules internal to language. But even if this were so, it supports my general point-- that the relative systematicity of language is proportional to the relative poverty of intrinsic semantic content-- or to put it in Davidson's terms: the linguistic meaning (but only the linguistic meaning) of a sentence (i.e., its "ideal" meaning, or signification) is nothing more nor less than the "literal" meaning of the sentence. The rest of meaning has little to do with language at all-- especially its rules and systems-- and I shall take this point up again in more detail later on (Chapters Nine and Ten).

9. To a limited extent, this problem can be avoided through recourse to the 'type-token' distinction (Lyons 1977), e.g., 'the word adjectival is [or is not] adjectival; and by trying to label different "logical levels." But in semantics, it would seem that a consistent or self-contained taxonomic system of logical levels would have to be either circular or arbitrary, since it would always (at some point) have to presuppose the signification of a pivotal 'word' in order to decide its "level," or else to assign a logical level to the word in order to settle its signification. The difficulty of constructing a metalanguage for language, such that all the different things that a language does could be given a separate set of names, which would not be words, in the same sense that certain 'symbols' used by mathematicians are not numbers, has been deferred through the strategy of claiming that not words, but only whole sentences, or whole discourses, have meaning. The other solution, which takes up the philosophical significance of the phoneme (cf. Jakobson 1942), will be touched upon in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

A TWIST OF THE LINGUISTIC TURN: PART TWO

What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: language. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus. Taken together, autonomy and responsibility constitute the only Idea that we possess a priori in the sense of the philosophical tradition (Habermas 1971, 314).

The internal connection between the linguistic turn and the classical desire to ground society in a contract or rational consensus is especially evident in the work of Jurgen Habermas.¹ In order to understand Habermas' intellectual project, we need to review, in simplified form, his concept of "knowledge-constitutive interests," and how it is related to a "systems-theoretic" account of modern society. Habermas (1979, 1987a) has developed a broadly phylogenetic perspective in which he has attempted to establish and to articulate thematic links between social evolution and the growth of knowledge. His intuition is that human society is an integrated or potentially integrated system of sub-systems, each corresponding to a naturalistically grounded, yet "quasi-transcendental human interest." There are three kinds of knowledge interest for Habermas: the interest in self-preservation, which is expressed in labour, technology, and systems of purposive rational action; the interest in communication, which is expressed in language, legal and political institutions, and

systems of communicative interaction; and the interest in emancipation, which is expressed in ideology and religion, and in the ideals of self-reflection, rational communication, and consensual validation of norms and goals. At the macroscopic level, social conflict arises in the modern age from the hypertrophy and/or autonomization of the systems corresponding to the practical interests, i.e., 'labour' or 'interaction', at the expense of the overriding human interest in emancipation, which is channeled variously in the different domains of knowledge, and is not reducible to the internal logical structure of any of them.

For Habermas, technical or instrumentalist reason has achieved practical dominance in the modern world, a mixed blessing which is reflected in Max Weber's influential epistemology of means-ends rationality (Habermas 1984). Habermas sees technical reason, which is typified for him in the modernist tendency to privilege "sub-systems of purposive rational action," as grounded in the "interest in self-preservation." The logic of self-preservation is essentially emancipatory; that is, technical mastery is potentially good for all members of the species. But technical mastery in and of itself does not necessarily serve the interests of human emancipation from nature, or from what Kant described as "tutelage." It may serve the domination of nature, including domination of the species itself, as Herbert Marcuse and Ivan Illich have argued (Habermas 1970b). But Habermas is not a "Luddite," and he

does not wish to overthrow technology. His work began as an attempt to relativize the influence of the paradigm of technical reason by linking it irreducibly to the sphere of communicative interaction. The domain of interaction and language is also, like that of labour and techniques, essentially emancipatory in its structure (1971). The quasi-transcendental function of communication is ultimately "enlightenment."² As in the sphere of labour, however, interaction may also be reduced to the logic of partial interests, in the service of domination through "systematically distorted communication" (1970c), techniques of manipulation, and authoritarian forms of social control. Consequently, Habermas sees the necessity of subordinating both domains of practical knowledge, labour and interaction, to the legislative authority of the interest in emancipation (1971), as embodied in the ideals of communicative rationality (1984).

What does Habermas mean by communicative rationality? The concept of communicative rationality, and of communicative interaction in general, has emerged in Habermas' work only subsequent to his explication of the "knowledge-constitutive interests," and represents an attempt to move away from the epistemological framework of Knowledge and Human Interests, with its key references to Kant and Hegel. The turning point seems to have been Habermas' engagements with hermeneutics and with systems theory, which coincided with his first efforts to elucidate

the problem of rational communication through a "universal pragmatics" (1979) grounded in the regulative concept of the "ideal speech situation" (1970c). The ideal speech situation is a model of pure discursive interaction which draws heavily on Chomsky's concept of linguistic competence (as opposed to linguistic performance): communicative competence, and the formal constituents of a rational, discursively achieved consensus, are both implicit in the deep structure of human communication, as reconstructed by Habermas on the analogy of transformational grammar. In support of this approach, Habermas also appealed to the work of Piaget, contending that human development naturally unfolds in a sequence of increasingly complex schemas which combine cognitive-epistemological and social-moral criteria in common structures of intersubjective rationality (1979). All communication implies the norms and goals of rational communication: symmetry (equal chances), reciprocity (mutual respect), coherence, and truthfulness. More recently, Habermas has tried to integrate the social psychology of Mead and Durkheim with the speech act theory of Austin and the ordinary language philosophers in order to establish a sociolinguistic account of the truth and validity conditions of communicative interaction (1984). This has enabled him to reassert his thesis that there is an internal connection between knowledge and life (i.e., the knowledge constitutive interests), and that it lies in the communicative origins of rationality, defined as respect for intersubjectively shared

communicative values, grounded in the rules and norms of interaction-- particularly linguistic interaction. This revised project does not entirely abandon the distinction between knowledge-constitutive interests with which Habermas' epistemological inquiry began; for it implies a theory of social action which, in the estimation of Morrow (1983), is "built around the contrast between two fundamental types of action: that oriented toward success as opposed [to that oriented] toward reaching an understanding, each subject to internal differentiations and their respective forms of progressive rationalization" (19). But the shift is decisively in the direction of a theory of language, which becomes the privileged site for the reconstruction of the emancipatory values which, for Habermas, still heroically undergird the development of knowledge and social being.

Habermas studied under Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School, and his aim has always been to plant "critical theory" in soil richer with rationality than that tilled by traditional or contemporary philosophy; but in the process, his conception of Reason and rationality has shifted in the direction of the more contemporary models (1987b). There are no longer any references to Reason standing apart from particular societies in a posture of semi-self-sufficient transcendence, embodying its own telos of "becoming transparent to itself," according to universal criteria that Plato, Kant, or Hegel might have endorsed. Reason has

become procedural. Like Carnap with regard to methods of empirical verification (or Popper with regard to falsification), Habermas believes that not only the methods of scientific investigation, but the activities of ordinary conversation, are susceptible to a type of "rational reconstruction" which will reveal the basis for adjudicating "validity claims" and achieving agreement or consensus. For Habermas, the problem is now to derive the forms of Reason from the particular situations of social actors in everyday life, according to the logic of Verstehen, or "understanding-- or in other words, to make sense of what people actually say to each other, according to the norms, rules and conventions of the language they actually use.

Meanings-- whether embodied in actions, institutions, products of labor, words, networks of cooperation, or documents-- can be made accessible only from the inside. Symbolically prestructured reality forms a universe that is hermetically sealed to the view of observers incapable of communicating; that is, it would have to remain incomprehensible to them. The lifeworld is open only to subjects who make use of their competence to speak and act. They gain access to it by participating, at least virtually, in the communications of members and thus becoming at least potential members themselves (Habermas 1984, 112).

In his most comprehensive work so far, The Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas maintains that the "rational core" of human interaction "can be laid open only if we give up the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness-- namely, a subject that represents objects and toils with them-- in favor of the paradigm of linguistic philosophy-- namely,

that of intersubjective understanding and communication-- and puts [sic] the cognitive-instrumental aspect of reason in its proper place as part of a more comprehensive communicative rationality" (390).

By moving so decisively into the domain of contemporary philosophy, Habermas (1984, 1987a) has in effect conceded the Heideggerian "hermeneutic claim to universality" which he had formerly disputed from a Hegelian or Western Marxist perspective (Habermas 1970; 1980). There can no longer be any fundamental disagreement with the view, expressed by Gadamer, that "we cannot see a linguistic world from above" because "there is no point of view outside the experience of the world in language from which it could itself become an object" (Gadamer 1975, 410). But for Habermas, statements like these do not undermine the possibility of a systematic and objective human science. The "symbolically pre-structured universe" can still become an 'object' of inquiry and reflection; but it can be objectified only relativistically, from a standpoint which is already embedded in the linguistic universe. Habermas' philosophical concern, paralleling that of the "self-understanding" of the linguistic turn, as explicated in particular by the analytic philosophers, is no longer to rediscover the values obscured by procedural knowledge, as was his original intent, but to discover the procedures hidden within relative knowledge. This represents a considerable drift from his earlier "Frankfurt" position.

The dilemma confronting Habermas at this stage of his theorizing arises from the limitations of the language paradigm itself. Language models of mind and society tend either to be vigorously relativistic (Winch 1958), and thus inherently self-limiting and partial as disciplinary perspectives; or less modest, but blandly universalistic and ineffectual. Neither of these alternatives is particularly well-suited to Habermas's programmatic needs. When the language paradigm allies itself with skepticism and relativism, it is likely to be self-refuting (Putnam 1987); and when it tries to avoid this fate-- when it eschews recourse to hard concepts like "incommensurability" (Kuhn, Feyerabend) or indeterminacy (Quine, Derrida), as Habermas wishes to do-- then it loses its bite, and there no longer seems much point in adopting it. Why, after all, should one want to end up with the truisms of Gadamer, who assures us that "to have language involves a mode of being that is quite different from the confinement of animals to their habitat;" and contends that "every [historical] world, as linguistically constituted, is always open, of itself, to every possible insight and hence for every expansion of its own world-picture, and is accordingly available to others" (Gadamer 1975, 411, 405)?

In his first assessment of Gadamer's Truth and Method, Habermas (1970, 361) stated: "An interpretive [verstehende] sociology that hypostatizes language to [sic] the subject of forms of life and of tradition ties itself to the idealist

presupposition that linguistically articulated consciousness determines the material practice of life. But the objective framework of social action is not exhausted by the dimension of intersubjectively intended and symbolically transmitted meaning. The linguistic infrastructure of society is part of a [larger] complex...." In fact, Habermas has maintained this view of sociolinguistic "idealism" in his subsequent embrace of the linguistic turn. The collective principle of rational development which Habermas has been seeking through the philosophy of language is more than simply a descriptive universality: it is a morally binding one. Habermas does not claim that his programme for revising the conceptual foundations of social scientific knowledge in terms of the relational properties of language and the interactional properties of language use, as outlined in The Theory of Communicative Action, is complete. It has the status of a "bold assumption," for what "emerges from the conceptual perspective of communicative action has only limited analytical and empirical range" (1987a, 118). In consequence, though Habermas does not agree with Talcott Parsons that language is only one of several equivalent "steering media" (like money and power), he has nevertheless leaned heavily on the concept of "action systems" in order to establish functional differentiations of the social "complex"-- all of them governed by language, to be sure, but none of them entirely levelled by it. What this boils down to is a methodological distinction between two basic

spheres of the social cosmos: the "life world," which is the constitutive domain of hermeneutic investigation; and the "system," which is the domain of social subsystems derived from the historical process of rationalization (where 'rationalization' is understood in the Weberian sense of the formalization and institutional differentiation of the various dimensions of social action).

But with this separation between the life world (Husserl, Schutz) and the social system (Parsons, Luhmann), Habermas actually takes us round in a circle: in effect, he has reconstituted, at the macrological level, what he had just been in the process of abandoning at the level of social interaction, from the standpoint of linguistic analysis: namely, the subject-object metaphysics of the "philosophy of consciousness." In Verstehen theory, hermeneutics, and Wittgensteinian sociology (Winch 1958; Dallmayr & McCarthy 1977), the lifeworld is the ideational ground of all phenomenological or cognitive experience; it is a kind of epistemological subject writ large: no longer Descartes' ego, perhaps, but certainly a kind of linguistic "we" who is just as worried about distinguishing between dreams and perceptions (by virtue of its collective identity with itself through the public acceptance of discursive reality) as was Descartes in the solitary confinement of self-reflection (by virtue of the cogito).

The social "system" which confronts the lifeworld, on the other hand, is everything that traditional Reason wished

and feared of its epistemological objects: on one hand, it is an objectification (or rationalization) of the cognitive, practical, and expressive potentials latent in the life world; but it is also a kind of "second nature" (perhaps indistinguishable, like Descartes' body, from a mechanical simulation [Baudrillard 1976])-- a "reification" (Lukacs 1923) of the intersubjective domain-- which has returned, in Frankensteinian revenge, to "colonize the lifeworld" (Habermas 1987a). In short, Habermas, with his linguistic turn, has not so much overcome traditional subject-object dialectics as he has abstracted and generalized them (cf. Benhabib 1986).

The traditional cognitivist dichotomy between the subject and his objective representations reappears everywhere in Habermas's model of the social world and its linguistic constituents. This is especially evident in his use of speech act theory. The concept "speech act" derives from J.L. Austin's criticisms of the logical positivist conception of language, or what he termed the "descriptive fallacy" (1962, 1-3, 12, 100). Austin pointed out that not all sentences are true-or-false 'statements' referring to a fact or describing a state of affairs. Some sentences are perfectly 'meaningful' without being truth conditional statements, and in order to demonstrate this, he defined a broad new category of utterances which he termed "performatives." A performative may be characterized as any utterance which is, in effect, "the doing of an action": marriage

vows, christenings, wills and testaments, promises, bets, and so on (5). But this performative character of language usage is much more general than the obvious institutional and ceremonial examples, such as inaugurations, toasts, sentencings, and the like, would indicate. Amid the increasingly technical debates within Anglo-American philosophy of language about verification, falsification, correspondence, and coherence, Austin was able to introduce a quite simple, but cogent new consideration which has nothing directly to do with 'truth': namely, that there is an important and general way in which "meaning" depends upon the assumption, tacit or explicit, that "saying can make it so." Encapsulated in a single phrase, this property of any and all utterances-- even truth conditional statements of fact, or "constatives"-- is called "illocutionary force."

According to Austin, all "locutions" are eo ipso "illocutions" as well (98), in the sense that every act of saying something also commits an act in saying it, if it be only the act of making others understand that a certain kind of statement is being made (99); and though some locutions may be analysable, according to various criteria of truth, as "constative" statements, they must also be considered from the angle of validity, appropriateness, or "felicity" (e.g., 140-). To state this in a general way: a promise is a promise in the illocutionary sense only to the extent that 1) the speaker has the authority, in the broad sense, to issue promises, and 2) the speaker is understood to be

submitting to "deontic necessity"-- to be making a commitment or undertaking an obligation.³ The overall effect of these considerations has been to throw into broad relief the substantial sociological factor which must enter, if only implicitly, even the purest reflections on language. It is in this general sense that speech act theory is important for Habermas, for it enables him to draw on the transactional and implicitly contractual dimension of all illocutionary meaning as warrant for a general ('universal' as opposed to relativistic) socio-linguistic theory of knowledge.

In How to Do Things with Words, Austin did not so much collapse his original distinction between constatives and performatives as displace it into the larger domain of locutions and illocutions (144-5), and reinterpret it in the light of the concept of illocutionary force (136). As Searle later makes clear in Speech Acts, the effect of this was to neutralize the traditional hardline dichotomy of fact and value.⁴ But the organizing function of the constative/performative distinction is sustained by a new contrast within the general category of performatives. This is the distinction between illocutions and perlocutions, which is central to Habermas's definition of communicative action. Here, the differential criterion rests on the concept of a linguistic rule, and in particular on the fact that, in Wittgenstein's estimation, there cannot be a "private" rule (or a private language). Austin had spoken primarily of

"conventions" of language usage, but Searle (1969) reinforced this line of reasoning with the strong claim that "speaking a language is...a... rule-governed form of behaviour" (12, 16, *passim*). Illocutions are thus verbally embodied actions which typically depend for their meaning on socially-grounded (and presumably agreed upon) rules and conventions about the appropriate ways of using language in particular situations, for particular purposes, and so on. This is the essential, or paradigmatic form of the performative utterance.

In contrast, the perlocutionary act exploits language to achieve effects or goals the meaning of which cannot be deduced from analysis of the locutions themselves. For example, there is no linguistic rule or convention which reveals the perlocutionary intention underlying what Iago says to Othello. There is nothing in our logic, grammar, or lexicon which would give us the slightest idea what Iago has in mind when he says that he is Othello's friend. (According to Searle [1969, 42f.], every locution is an illocution, but not necessarily a perlocution.) It may be entirely normal that the illocution 'I am arguing x' should convince a listener of 'x,' but conviction in the illocutionee (a perlocutionary effect) does not follow by any strong kind of necessity, for the simple reason that arguments, no matter how cogent and well-understood, neither entail, nor presuppose, nor even imply it. People will think what they will think of what they hear, and the fact that their

reasons may be extrinsic to what they hear does not make them inherently invalid. The same goes for the relationship between all illocutions and all perlocutionary effects. The meaning of an illocutionary act is supposed to be governed by the rules of speech activity, whereas perlocutionary effects are by definition fortuitous or contingent, and thus external to these rules.

This gives us something like Carnap's distinction between questions internal and questions external to the language frame we adopt. The difference is that in Austin's account, a certain amount of background knowledge, generally social in nature, is now seen to be embedded in the language itself, and susceptible of reconstruction. As Austin (1962) put it, "A judge should be able to decide, by hearing what was said, what locutionary and illocutionary acts were performed, but not what perlocutionary acts were achieved" (121). Searle (1969) argues in support of this that illocutions themselves presuppose an intrinsic intention of their own-- the intention to be understood-- and he has been careful to distinguish this specifically illocutionary intention, or "force," or "effect," from the sort of thing that Iago might be up to-- the perlocutionary aims and effects, such as deceiving, persuading, threatening, and the like (42-50). The latter constitute what in Habermas's view may be deemed the strategic uses of language, whereas illocutionary acts are in principle formal enactments which transcend the contingency of the perlocutionary domain

through their intrinsic "orientation toward understanding."

Thus I count as communicative action those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and only illocutionary aims.... On the other hand, I regard as linguistically mediated strategic action those interactions in which at least one of the participants wants with his speech acts to produce perlocutionary effects on his opposite number (1984, 295).

Thus, in adopting the taxonomy of speech acts, Habermas is able to maintain with some plausibility that there are "certain guarantees immanent to speech acts and certain obligations relevant to the sequel of interaction" (296).

Now, there is another wrinkle in all of this, a line of argumentation implicit in Austin and Searle, which Habermas brings out. This is the Davidsonian idea that "truth claims are... a type of validity claim built into the structure of possible speech in general" (Habermas 1979, 52). All the variety of ways in which language can be used-- lying, deception, irony, joking, poetry, metaphor, and so on-- are in one way or another parasitic on the basic structure of illocutionary exchange. When I make a promise, I am bound by rules of meaning and conventions of social action in a specific way, which constitutes the "illocutionary force" of my promisory utterance. I cannot make a promise without intending to be understood in that way, regardless of my ulterior motives. The strategic use of language may thus be characterized as manipulative in a way that is dependent upon the truth or validity conditions of utterances

precisely because it exploits the expectations inscribed in the "system of rules" which determine the meaning of the illocutionary act. Since all verbal strategies depend upon the illocutionary force of what is said, the speaker must rely, ipso facto, upon the rules and conventions of language use in everything he says, confirming them over and over again, in spite of himself.

This point can be generalized into a kind of theorem, to the effect that a "verbal," "institutionally unbound," "explicit," "context-independent" statement constitutes the basic unit of analysis of communicative action (1979, 40). By restricting the meaning of communicative action to the linguistically analysable properties of illocutionary acts (1984, 293-5), Habermas is able to posit a kind of truth-conditional, regulative sociological model grounded not in transcendental reason, but in "empirical" developmental research (Durkheim on the "linguistification of the sacred" [Habermas 1987a], Mead on the social origins of subjectivity [Habermas 1987a], Chomsky on universal grammar [Habermas 1970c], Piaget on cognitive development [Habermas 1979], Kohlberg on moral development [Habermas 1979]). The illocutionary form of the speech act embodies the fundamental social and cognitive presuppositions upon which all acts of communication depend: the illocutionary aim of "reaching understanding is the original mode of language use, upon which... the instrumental use of language in general [is] parasitic" (1984, 288). Thus, if we bracket

the actualities of embodied linguistic interaction and suspend the greater part of the social network surrounding the speech act-- cultural expectations, institutional norms, strategic intentions, and every sort of activity and force other than the fundamental intentions to reach an understanding, to give reasons, and to examine the validity of arguments-- we have, in essence, what Habermas posits as the "telos" of speech and the precondition of all communicative behaviour-- not only an "ideal speech situation," but a microcosm of social action in its immanent, developmental rationality.

What Habermas really means, then, when he talks of a paradigm shift away from the subject-object philosophy of consciousness toward a theory of communicative action is that he wants a model of interaction which can be derived exclusively from a formal model of the internal relations of language (1970c). He wants to be able to say that the validity criteria of speech acts can be discovered within the statements themselves-- that they are accessible to "rational reconstruction" in the same way that a text is available for analysis and criticism. If this could be done, then correct or valid speech acts could in principle be determined in every instance; and since linguistic utterances have already been established as paradigmatic cases of social action, it follows that everything social, at least in the public sphere, is susceptible to evaluation and adjudication by means of argumentation leading

potentially to rational consensus.⁵

Now, Habermas is perfectly aware that in practice, the illocutionary guarantees and obligations of speech acts are widely experienced as contingent on other dimensions of social action: they may be "institutionally bound," insincere, coerced, distorted, or misunderstood, to name only a few of the typical limitations on ordinary verbal communication. But he is insistent that a universal normative structure of moral-communicative reason can be reconstructed from the analysis of the illocutionary act. What is remarkable about this argument is the extent of its claim for formalizability. In the heyday of logical positivism, Schlick, Wittgenstein, and Russell urged the possibility, at one time or another, of a limited mathesis--an ideal assertoric or description language derived from work on logical syntax, propositional form, mathematics, and so on. This was certainly an ambitious programme, but it was also a self-limiting one, because the positivists were ideologically constrained by the Humean distinction between fact and value. Habermas is evidently after much bigger game. He wants to deploy the linguistic-analytic model of communication throughout the entire domain of the social sciences.

The theory of communicative action depends upon the concept of a linguistic rule, and more particularly on the existence of a rule-governed illocutionary dimension of linguistic behaviour whose epistemological self-containment

is warranted by the external and contingent nature of perlocutionary effects.⁶ Now, there are several problems with this. The first and most obvious has to do with Habermas's use of the category of "understanding" in the context of speech act theory. Searle defines the intention characteristically underlying each and every illocution as the wish to get the addressee to understand the illocution itself. "In the case of illocutionary acts we succeed in doing what we are trying to do by getting our audience to recognize what we are trying to do. But the 'effect' on the hearer is not a belief or a response, it consists simply in the hearer understanding the utterance of the speaker. It is this effect that I have been calling the illocutionary effect" (47, emphasis added). In rather marked contrast to Searle, Habermas speaks of "illocutionary aims"-- in the plural-- and groups these under the general heading of "an orientation toward reaching understanding." In order to reach an understanding, a concept which for Habermas "must be clarified solely in connection with illocutionary acts" (1984, 293), the interlocutors must do all sorts of things to each other with words which exceed the 'literal' understanding, as Searle defines it, of what the other's illocutions mean. They must at the very least refrain from the strategic use of language. They must also, in so doing, be sincere and truthful, and they must try to convince each other with arguments, be able to criticize each other's arguments, and be willing in the end to agree to submit to

the better argument. This is a very large normative load for a mere illocution to carry. There is, after all, a considerable difference between understanding what the other person has said (in Searle's sense), and reaching an understanding, in the sense of being convinced by what the other has said, deciding to agree with it, believing it to be true, and the like. Habermas does not, as would Searle, count the latter as perlocutionary considerations, but as properly illocutionary effects of intrinsically illocutionary aims. Thus, Habermas redefines the concept of illocutionary intent to include only what he considers to be the more rational forms of perlocutionary aim (to persuade, to convince, to criticize, to establish the truth of statements, and so on). In other words, he has identified reason with what is internal to language (and grouped everything external to it into the category of irrational manipulation). But in thus expanding the normative content of the illocutionary act, and thereby complicating its structure, Habermas places his own argument at risk in two ways. The illocution/perlocution distinction loses its clarity; and illocutions themselves seem thereby to become less accessible to formal analysis than they were before.

Let me try to illustrate this. Austin's differentiation between locutions and illocutions on the one hand, and perlocutions on the other, started out innocently enough as an elaborate way of drawing attention to the difference between putting something on the record and doing something

with (or on the basis of) the record. Establishing a verbal record can itself be a complicated enough business, fraught with hermeneutic puzzles of its own, but in ordinary circumstances, it is a fairly straightforward and partly systematizable kind of activity which can to some extent be boiled down to rules and conventions upon which most people can agree. One thinks of court clerks, lexicographers, and editors of definitive editions. But the normative content of acts of placing on the record is probably very minimal. Apart from the effort to understand what is being said, the only obligations plausibly imposed by the illocutionary act are those which encourage the illocutioner to say (for whatever reason) more or less what he wants to say (assuming that the illocutioner in fact knows what he wants to say and how to say it, which of course is often not the case).⁷

Doing something with the record beyond merely establishing its existence, however, is entirely another matter. Saying that one is promising something and being so understood is a matter of putting something on the record; but getting others to accept the validity of the promise and getting them to act as if the promise will be fulfilled--these are not exclusively illocutionary matters, and they cannot simply be read off the record. One way of securing a promise is to draw up a contract and sign it. A contract not only binds the interlocutors verbally and legally to the 'meaning' of what they say, but it obliges them to act on this meaning in the way that the contract says they should.

Moreover, a contract embodies the idea that the participants are sincere, at least with regard to the 'letter' of the statements they have signed, and that their 'claims' are 'true,' 'valid,' and so on. Now, there is a sense in which the idea of a contract is 'immanent' in the concept of a promise-- a contract can be seen as a kind of elaborated reconstruction of the act of promising; and it is precisely this kind of normative structure which Habermas wants to read into the form of the illocutionary act in general, as the paradigm of communicative action. But not all illocutions are promises.

Habermas's metatheoretical preoccupations are like thought experiments designed to test the scope of the language paradigm, but their abstractness invites extremes of interpretation. Given the central role of the theory of communicative action in Habermas's projection of the rational communication society, the arguments we have been reviewing imply a prescriptive conception of semantics and a correspondingly repressive model of ideal social form which Habermas does not in fact hold.⁸ This way of interpreting Habermas is reminiscent of Barthes (1978, 14), when he averred that language (langue) is "fascist." But the same Habermasian arguments can be turned the other way round, to suggest instead that the social effectivity of language lends itself to intrinsic linguistic reconstruction, analysis, and regulation, only in a very limited way. Let us explore this alternative possibility.

Habermas defines communicative action as "the type of interaction in which all participants harmonize their individual plans of action with one another and thus pursue their illocutionary aims without reservation" (1984, 294). Unfortunately, it is not difficult to come up with interesting counterexamples-- cases where it might plausibly be considered irrational-- or at least unwise-- to enforce or to comply with such preconditions. Let us suppose for example that in an ideal communication society a group of philosophers convene in order to discuss a crucial moral issue in their capacity as advisors to government on important policy questions. They informally select a chairperson and the chairperson starts the meeting by invoking Habermas's theory of communicative action. But then one of the illocutioners immediately challenges the right of another participant to take part in the discussion, on the grounds that certain details of the participant's private life cast doubt on his reliability as a sincere illocutioner. The accused participant promptly admits to his failures in private life, but insists that they have never affected his ability, in the interests of communicative action, to control his unfortunate impulse to indulge in the strategic use of language-- at least, not in his capacity as a government advisor. Moreover, his official record as a public illocutioner is impeccable. These defensive illocutions are accepted at face value by all the other illocutioners as sincere, valid, and truthful,

but the group nevertheless divides into three factions. One faction sides with the accuser, another calls for the expulsion of the accuser himself, on the grounds that he has not demonstrated the appropriate orientation toward reaching understanding (and has thus prejudiced the harmonization of individual plans), and the third calls for a temporary adjournment of the interaction. However, the third faction cannot agree on its own rationale for adjournment. One of them wants time to ascertain the 'facts'; another wants to 'analyze' the record of the illocutions which have just transpired, including his own; and a third wants the tension to blow over so that harmonization can be reestablished. In short, the entire interaction breaks down in a morass of sincere, valid, truthful, and perfectly rational strategic actions.

Habermas does not explain on what grounds one could legitimately decide, from within the "extramundane" (293) world of communicative interaction, to abrogate the illocutionary pact. If there are rational grounds for entering an ideal speech situation, there ought to be rational grounds for getting out of it as well. But that would allow for the contrary of the theory of communicative action, namely that the immanent rationality of linguistic communication might not be to reach an understanding-- at least, not until such time as the sincerity of the participants, and (once this is mysteriously established) the validity of their illocutions, can be secured -- or at

least reinforced-- by independent means. Unfortunately, Habermas has disqualified all such counterinstances in advance, by building some perlocutionary effects (those which make for harmony) into the illocutionary intention itself (while excluding others as "strategic"). Yet on a strict interpretation of the theory, there is no way to know whether one has really begun, or is successfully continuing, a proper round of communicative action, without having at least some prior knowledge-- not to mention agreement-- about what the understanding to be produced would actually be. In practice, of course, this kind of "foreknowledge" can, like "background information," be obtained by various means; but its very possession would seem to compromise the purity of the ideal communication situation itself.⁹

These difficulties highlight not only the philosophical problems generated by any attempt to fix an exact relationship between language, truth, and logic (as Rorty, Quine, and a host of sincere philosophers have maintained), but also a certain asymmetry in Habermas's interpretation of speech act theory. To put it bluntly, the theory of communicative action seems to build in a moral advantage for the illocutioner over the illocutionee. As we have seen, in Habermas's account, the illocutioner has a variety of "aims" which are binding on the listener. "In every instance of communicative action the system of all validity claims come into play" (Habermas 1979, 66). If listeners wish to engage in communicative interaction, to become illocutioners

themselves, they must not only understand the illocution, as Searle would stipulate, but also comply with a series of normative and prescriptive demands which require them to suspend strategic intentions and thus, presumably, to refrain from acting on strategic considerations in general, such as those considered rationally by the group of philosophers in the example discussed above.¹⁰

Let us imagine a dyadic situation in which an experimental subject (deemed by a panel of qualified experts to be a rational agent with a strong sense of moral obligation who has read and understood Habermas) encounters an illocutioner who asserts 'x.' The illocutioner then claims that immanent in the form of 'x,' or anything else he says, is a contract which the subject must sign in order to enter into conversation with the illocutioner about 'x,' or anything else. Our subject asks, "what kind of contract is it?" The illocutioner replies: "It is the contract implicit in Habermas's theory of communicative action." Our subject withdraws momentarily in order to consider this proposition. Finally she replies that she cannot respond to the illocutioner's assertion of 'x' until she has reread Habermas. Unfortunately, she is not sure when she will be able to find the time. The reason for this decision, she explains, is that she is not certain whether Habermas's theory of communicative action makes a difference. In order to make a difference, she explains, the normative structure of communicative action would have to place significant

constraints on her freedom to act as she sees fit. To such conditions, she cannot in good conscience agree-- at least, certainly not merely in order to discuss 'x.' On the other hand, the theory of communicative action has a certain air of redundancy. If it really doesn't make any difference whether she signs or not, she will gladly do so, if only to hear the illocutioner out, and satisfy her curiosity.

Habermas's argument depends upon the possibility of distinguishing communicative action from strategic action in order to exclude the latter. This in turn presupposes the validity of Austin's less explicitly normative distinction between illocutions and perlocutions. Unfortunately, speech act theorists have not been able to establish Austin's taxonomy, because no one has been able to show that the understanding of an illocution never requires the understanding of a corresponding perlocution (Cohen 1973).¹¹ There are also logical difficulties with the distinction. For example, Searle states (46) that saying "Hello" does not necessarily have any perlocutionary effect. "Hello" can just mean what it says, i.e., that the speaker wants the hearer to understand that the speaker is greeting him. This sounds plausible enough, but it is difficult to square with the fact that not saying "hello" surely does have a perlocutionary effect in some situations. Does saying something ("hello") in circumstances where not saying it would have had a perlocutionary effect, also have a perlocutionary effect? Since not saying something is (one

would assume) by definition neither a locutionary nor an illocutionary act, the meaning of not saying "hello" must be perlocutionary in nature (if these are the only kinds of meaning available). Presumably the one who is not greeted in the customary way is meant to "understand" something by this. But according to Searle, the latter is criterial of "illocutionary force"-- that the hearer should understand the utterance of the speaker (47). In the case before us, however, there is no utterance to analyse. There is, at least, nothing on the verbal record. So it follows that either perlocutionary effects are part and parcel of the "rule-governed" activity of illocutionary meaning, which destroys the argument that there is a generic distinction between illocutions and perlocutions such that the former are rule-governed and conventional in nature, and the latter are not;¹² or else there are no particular rules of any real consequence governing the validity or meaning of either illocutions or perlocutions (which is more likely the case). In other words, the fundamental basis of Habermas's normative analysis of the speech act-- that certain levels of linguistic interaction are purely strategic, fortuitous, contingent, and contrary to the aim of reaching an understanding; that when they are subtracted from linguistic interaction, the remainder is universal; and that this universal remainder is not only sufficient, but necessary and self-sufficient, for the process of reaching a rational understanding-- all of this is to say the least doubtful.

There is probably just no uniform, logically reconstructible link between words and meanings. It thus looks as if Habermas's impressive reflections on such things as a "system of validity claims" amounts to little more than a technical description of the kinds of decorum that are conducive to polite and informative conversation. No fantastic new force or principle "immanent" in language emerges which will, if only recognized, transform society or produce better knowledge.

If we return to the standpoint of the language paradigm as a whole, we can say that the main criticism of the theory of communicative action is that it does not, on close scrutiny, introduce a novel problematic; on the contrary, like the rest of the language paradigm, it is an attempt to rethink traditional concerns about Reason, specifically, the problem of how to formulate and implement rational ideas through some sort of social contract. There is nothing wrong with doing this, but there is no reason to believe that it will settle the old questions, or raise interesting new ones. In the end, whether or not the linguistic rules to which Habermas appeals can ever be explicated doesn't really matter: he is essentially saying that he wants to attribute "epistemic authority to the community of all who cooperate and speak with one another" (1987b, 314). All this means is that we believe what we want to believe, and that we are likely to be influenced in this by the community to which we belong. In this basic assumption, Habermas is

at one with a very large majority of contemporary thinkers. The real novelty of his argument is that he thinks he may have found a compelling reason for everybody to join the same epistemic community. But even on this point, Habermas expresses some doubt: "The anticipation of the ideal speech community has... the significance of a constitutive illusion, which at the same time has the appearance of a form of life. Of course, we cannot know a priori whether that appearance is a mere delusion..." (1973, 259).

Apart from such questions of faith, however, it is not clear how Habermas really differs from his critics with regard to the question of "epistemic authority," or what substantial counterclaims they have been able to make. Rorty (1985) says that we can have epistemic authority, and by the same procedures of argumentation and consensus as Habermas recommends, but without the unnecessary distraction of chasing after universal rules. And Lyotard (1979), like Foucault (1970), gives even more intrinsic weight to epistemic authority than Rorty, by repudiating it on the grounds that it has worked only too well in the past for anybody's good. Lyotard (Lyotard & Thebaud 1985) suggests that instead we ought to go back to the "pagan" conception of the good judge in Aristotle's Rhetoric. According to Lyotard, Aristotle's judge "is himself caught in the very sphere of language as those who will be... judged;" but he is nevertheless a just man so long as he judges well.¹³

In order for the linguistic turn to constitute a

paradigmatic shift, it must reveal something in the structure of language whose consequences were not understood before. Unfortunately, very little along these lines has been demonstrated, at least in Anglo-American and German schools of thought. The credibility of the linguistic turn in the social sciences has rested largely on its philosophical prestige: it offers a more appropriate range of metaphors for the classical problem of social order than could be gleaned from mechanistic, objectivist, and reductionist science. Beyond this sense of having at last discovered some kind of truth (or lack thereof), language models of mind and society have not been able to offer cogent "paradigms" which are not themselves objectivistic or reductionistic: either they presuppose symbolic processes without acknowledging them, thereby misplacing meaning in language, as I shall demonstrate in more detail later; or they actively deny psychosomatic interaction in order to replace symbolic activity with a conceptually smoother and more predictable interface of signifying surfaces. But the question remains: is linguistic epistemology, ineffectual as it may be, nevertheless capable of practical implementation? And if so, is it capable of destroying what it doesn't recognize as valid or knowable? Is the language paradigm an intellectual expression of some larger historical movement-- an "increasingly powerful historical expansion of a general writing" (Derrida 1977, 195)-- which has fundamental effects: is it capable, in other words, of becoming

true, as Baudrillard (1972, 1976) and others have implied?

A serious answer to this question belongs in a detailed study of formalization and rationalization as projects of civilization. Plato was in many ways the spiritual father of the linguistic turn, and the anthropologist Stanley Diamond (1974) has argued that Plato's purpose was the systematic suppression of the expressive, dramaturgical element in primitive social organization. Of course, whether such an aim is to be entirely regretted is debatable. Michel Serres (1968) defends Plato on exactly the grounds that Diamond indicts him: Serres's version of Plato envisions a "kingdom of the excluded third," a realm of communication purged of noise, where compatibles "fight together for the emergence of a truth in which the goal is to place themselves in agreement" (41-3). The aim is to "complete a process by which one passes from a concrete mode of thought to an abstract form (or forms); it is, in other words, to eliminate noise in the optimum manner" (43). Serres relates this dyadic ideal of communication directly to a "profound revolution in the question of meaning" engendered by the linguistic turn. According to him:

[structural analysis] generates families of models with distinct significative content which have in common a structural analogon of form; the latter is the operational invariant, abstracted from all content, which organizes them. This process of abstraction is so complete that, once the structure is isolated as such (i.e., the abstract elements and relations) it is possible to discover all the imaginable models it generates; in other words, it is possible to const-

ruct a living cultural being by filling a form with meaning (sens).... To liberate oneself from meaning and to dominate it... to generate a being from a formal analogon, to deploy the chain of pure consequences of a given structure and to designate at leisure to which stage of this chain a model corresponds-- all this defines with precision what structuralist analysis is (32-3).

We shall examine some of the permutations of this structuralist model of language, as they pertain to the problem of the symbolic process, in the following chapter.

Notes to Chapter Three

1.The following account may be seen as a footnote to Arthur Kroker's thesis that Habermas' project is to forestall a civilizational crisis by bringing about a "compromise" with the repressive forms of Reason. The purpose of the present discussion, however, is to illustrate the modalities of the language paradigm, and not to engage the fate of critical thought in contemporary civilization directly. See Kroker & Cook (1987, 253-61).

2.Habermas' quarrel with Adorno, his teacher, and other members of the Frankfurt School, and with neostructuralists and Nietzscheans such as Foucault and Heidegger, over the value and meaning of the Enlightenment as a historical epoch and over the desirability of enlightenment as a social ideal, will not be discussed here.

3.The term "deontic necessity" is taken from John Lyons, who provides a useful outline of speech act theory (1977, 725ff.), and underscores the importance of the concepts of authority and commitment in speech act theory (1981, 191-193), so important to Habermas's argument.

4.John Searle's study of the speech act (1969) represents the best known attempt to systematize Austin's ideas, and thus to effect a finer balance between the different strands of Austin's argument. He addresses the problem of value in just the way that Habermas requires:

...to call an argument valid is already to evaluate it and yet the statement that it is valid follows from certain 'descriptive' statements about it. The very notions of what it is to be a valid argument, a cogent argument, a good piece of reasoning are evaluative... because...they involve the notions of what one is justified or right in concluding..... For example, the statement that p entails q entails, among other things, that anyone who asserts p is committed to the truth of q, and that if p is known to be true then one is justified in concluding that q. And the notions of commitment and justification in such cases are no more and no less 'evaluative' than they are when we speak of being committed to doing something or being justified in declaring war (175-6).

See also Austin, 51-52.

5.Of course, the same procedure would be conceivable even if validity criteria internal to illocutions, or perhaps even validity criteria of any kind, could not be established, which seems to be Rorty's (1985) main point about Habermas.

6.Habermas 1984, 295: "Thus I count as communicative action those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and only illocutionary aims, with their mediating acts of communication. On the other hand, I regard as linguistically mediated strategic action those interactions in which at least one of the participants wants with his speech acts to produce perlocutionary effects on his opposite number."

7.These issues are discussed by Habermas from the point of view of a developmental theory of communicative competence--essentially a theory of secondary process thinking. While Habermas's developmentalist arguments go some way toward answering many of the objections to his theory of communicative action, they are based on assumptions (for example, Piagetian epistemology) which will be discussed in subsequent chapters, and so I shall not deal with them here.

8.A similar objection, based on the tension between the constitutive theory and the emancipatory content of Habermas's theory of rationality, has been advanced by Seyla Benhabib (1986, 327ff.), and in Raymond Morrow's (1988) review of Habermas's developmental theory.

9.Habermas (1984, 335-7) touches on these problems in his discussion of "implicit knowledge." See also his (1987b) account of the lifeworld.

10.Since Habermas has given so much power and weight to illocutionary force, it is important for him to distinguish between imperatives which are expressions of contingent will (strategic, perlocutionary) and imperatives which "rationally motivate" the listener on the basis of a validity claim. The latter may be backed up by sanctions (external conditions), but these in turn may be warranted by "convincing reasons" (e.g., safety regulations on an airplane). Since "validity claims are internally connected with reasons and grounds...the conditions for the acceptability of directions can be found in the illocutionary meaning of the speech act itself" (1984, 301-2). "We are now in a position to say that a speaker can rationally motivate a hearer to accept a speech act offer because-- on the basis of an internal connection among validity, validity claim, and redemption of a validity claim-- he can assume the warranty for providing, if necessary, convincing reasons that would stand up to a hearer's criticism of the validity claim. Thus a speaker owes the binding (or bonding: bindende) force of his

illocutionary act not to the validity of what is said, but to the coordinating effect of the warranty that he offers: namely, to redeem, if necessary, the validity claim raised with his speech act. In all cases in which the illocutionary role expresses not a power claim but a validity claim, the place of the empirically motivating force of sanctions (contingently linked with speech acts) is taken by the rationally motivating force of accepting a speaker's guarantee for securing claims to validity" (302).

By thus distinguishing between perlocutionary power claims and illocutionary validity claims, Habermas helps to solve a number of conceptual problems with speech act theory; but he does not succeed in restoring the illocutionary act to its Austinian innocence: in the theory of communicative action, the illocutionary act has become, at least in theory, an important instrument of social regulation and control.

11. Habermas recognizes this problem, and, as we have seen, attempts to solve it by refusing to accept that the relationship between "the concept of the validity of a sentence" and "the concept of redeeming the validity claim raised through the utterance of the sentence" is not simply a relationship internal to the illocution itself, but also a relationship between an illocution and a perlocution, or between an illocution and something else entirely non-linguistic (Habermas 1984, 316').

12. Cohen, 493: the illocution/ perlocution distinction "does not unfailingly mark a distinction between what is conventional and what is not."

13. Lyotard & Thebaud (1985, 26-29): "there is paganism whenever there is this very curious representation wherein he who states the just is himself as caught in the very sphere of language as those who will be the recipients of his prescriptions, and may eventually be judged by the judge" (28).

CHAPTER FOUR

LANGUAGE ABOUT NONLANGUAGE IN NEO-STRUCTURALIST THOUGHT

I know of no other form of behavior than the linguistic in which the individual is an object to himself, and, so far as I can see, the individual is not a self in the reflexive sense unless he is an object to himself (Mead, 142).

On Linguistic Models of Psychic Process in General

There is a profound discontinuity between the psychic process and linguistic competence in the Chomskian sense. More or less everybody agrees on this. But if we were to assume that the psyche, nulla culte, unformed by language and as yet barely moulded by social forces, were essentially a chaos, a jumble of "thing presentations," impulses, and discharges, with no sense of time, position, contradiction, or identity, then the gap between psyche and language would be of little philosophic or social scientific consequence. The noncoincidence of psyche in a state of nature and socialized mind would be rather more like another version of the division between questions external and questions internal to language, or mind and body-- mind and world. The concept of the psyche would be subsumed by the rest of the "world of objects and events," a conventional consequence of linguistic habit, a position within a language game which, like all the other positions, is underdetermined by evidence independent of prevailing habits of speech. We would just say that the psyche exists in the forms of our language, and that any question of the reality-- any ontological question

-- of the unconscious, such as Freud introduced into modern scientific discussion, should be referred back to those descriptions of the world where the term 'psyche' has a conventional place. To the extent that 'psyche' includes the notion of a kind of being which is simply the negative of the order which characterizes our knowledge of anything (a being without time, place, or identity); to the extent, in other words, that "conversation" (in Rorty's philosophical sense) breaks down in silence when "chaos" is brought into play-- to that extent, we have reached the mystical Wittgensteinian limit of our knowledge. From this standpoint, it makes more sense to cancel the whole idea 'psyche' out of the equation, or at least to bury it somewhere in a darker corner of the web of words; for like any place holder within a formal linguistic frame, 'psyche' could well be substituted by some other term, with a different but related cluster of implications, such as 'society,' more amenable to conversation (cf. Rorty 1986).

In spite of Freud, and in a way also because of him, this is essentially what has happened in philosophy and the social sciences. What Freud still called 'Seele' (soul) has become a kind of corporate ego, and the metaphysics of mind have become the sociology of ego relations (Levin 1987a). With Frege's distinction between Sinn and Bedeutung (meaning [sense] and reference)-- and his conception of meaning as a matter of public convention (the social sign, "which may be the common property of many and therefore is not a part of a

mode of the individual mind")-- the whole emphasis of Anglo-European thought has shifted from the naive study of the relation between experience and meaning to the study of the interrelations of public discourse (Hacking 1975, 50, *passim*).

This revolution has carried over directly into psychoanalysis itself. There is no doubt that the increasing influence of the sociological perspective within psychoanalytic thought is partly the result of Hartmann's (1939, 1944) ego psychological emphasis on adaptation and Talcott Parsons's (1951, 201-241, e.g., 223, 546) related work on "socialization"; and it is also due to the shift of emphasis brought about by the rise of object relations theory (e.g., Chodorow 1978), and the work of such pioneers as Bowlby (1969).¹ But the influence of the Lacanian model should not be overlooked, especially because it links the problems of psychoanalytic thought directly with central themes in the philosophy of language. For Lacan, at least in the popularized versions of his work, the "subject" is already "positioned" before birth by his Proper Name, which inscribes him in a Symbolic Order whose power of structural determination overrides and precedes not only the social experience of the individual infant, but the socializing force of society as well. There can be no prediscursive self, no cohesive experience of the body prior to language (Rose 1982, 30, 55). Even the unconscious is defined as "the Discourse of the Other" (e.g., Lacan 1974, 26); it is a

kind of after effect-- an apres coup-- of primal repression, since "the moment in which desire becomes human is also the moment in which the child is born into language." (Lacan 1977, 103). Thus, from a slightly different angle of view, the Lacanian perspective calibrates neatly with the mainstream contractualism of contemporary philosophy. According to Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1973), "There can be no subject for Lacan which is not always already a social subject.... The terms in which Lacan describes this are in the end very close to those of classical philosophical anthropology. The subject... is in effect the subject of a contract which guarantees speech.... [and] the conventional passage from animality to humanity" (34-5).

Descartes (1637) was already beginning to move in this direction when he mustered the argument, still in behalf of the soul, that you can not tell a human being from a simulation of a human being except by observing linguistic behaviour and the use of "other signs," because together with rational behaviour in general, these are the only bodily indications that the organism is up to more than what nature in the raw is already doing anyway (116). The existing and knowable forms of nature can all be duplicated in principle by automata constructed according to the laws of mechanics. Consequently, the observational criteria for telling the difference between unalloyed mechanical organisms such as monkeys, and soul-bearing organisms such as humans, must be derived from the premise that linguistic

interaction, or what modern philosophers call "intersubjectivity," is too complex and subtle to be recreated mechanically. This consideration Descartes took as evidence of the divine origin of the language capacity. Such reflections represent, of course, an early stage in the linguistic turn-- a variation on Plato's theory that phenomena are copies of Forms which correspond to proper names as abstract universals. By the time we get to Gilles Deleuze and Jean Baudrillard, however, Descartes's supernatural God has been thoroughly skewered, and there is nothing left but simulacra.²

Yet, in spite of the triumph of naturalism in the Nineteenth Century, represented most forcefully by the influential writings of Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, the celebrated Cartesian split between mind and body has survived in contemporary philosophy and social science, especially through the characteristically Twentieth Century distinction between culture and nature. We may no longer have any faith in the identity of Descartes' ego with itself, but we still believe that somehow the linguistic 'we' escapes nature-- or at least, nature as we currently imagine it. For example, when Rorty (1979) argues generally that empirical knowledge about the body and the psychophysics of perception is in principle irrelevant to the great philosophical questions about human knowledge and conduct, which arise only through language, and thus can be determined only through language, he is implicitly

reproducing the classical dichotomy between the unschooled body (a chaos of appetites and sense impressions) and the cultural order of the human mind (in which everything has its place). By translating mind and body respectively into culture and nature, we have cashed in Descartes' transcendental certainty and abandoned all Pythagorean faith in a discrete harmonics of true nature; but we have by no means settled for just plain old uncertainty and ordinary irrationality. It is as if we must insist that uncertainty and irrationality are themselves transcendental in character. The deaths of God, Spirit, and Soul have been well compensated, in the postpositivist universe, by the intellectual fecundity of Language, Culture, and Society. Thus, we are inclined to say, with George Herbert Mead, for example, or with B.F. Skinner, Erving Goffman, Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Habermas, e+c, that "the self is essentially a social structure" (Mead 1934, 140).

We shall probably never know what the "link" between nature and culture is, because culture and nature are not likely to be the sorts of thing that can be linked, like horses and carriages. The two terms come as close to exhausting our general ideas about what there is in the universe as any two terms in Indo-European language, and so one of them is always on the verge of having to give way, in order to become simply a special description of the other. It probably makes very little difference whether we decide that the best option for epistemology is 'materialism' or

'idealism.'³ As Rorty suggests, the value of epistemology has been much overstated. More important is the question of how we choose to understand the relationship between the differences that we do perceive. The polarities of mind and body, nature and culture only make sense within the old philosophical tradition, that is, in terms of the opposition between order and chaos. For example, Whorf (1956) thought that "the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds... largely by the linguistic systems in our minds.... We cut nature up...largely because we are parties to an agreement ...that holds throughout our language community and is codified in the patterns of our language" (213). Whorf's version of the social contract is, of course, a thoroughly modern, Saussurian one, since it is bounded neither by God nor seventeenth century Nature, but only by other languages. Yet the parallel opposition that it implies-- between mind, culture, language, and social organization on one side, and body, nature, mutism, and individual chaos on the other-- in short, between the order of the mind and the disorder of the body-- is older than Plato.

The relationship between what we call, for convenience's sake, 'culture,' and what we call, for lack of a better word, 'nature' is not some paradoxical interface between order and randomness, nor is the psychic process a manifestation of culture imposed upon nature. The idea that mind originates in a state of primary undifferentiation, as

a transformation of it, is a myth. Merleau-Ponty (1962) understood this completely when he suggested that "a theory of the body is already a theory of perception" (203ff). The psyche originates in the human body, and the latter is not some sort of confusion that is subsequently structured by Reason, Language, Society, or the Lacanian Father. There is no contract involved in the primary relationships between human organisms. The notion that the necessary organization which makes mind and world possible consists of something that sets human existence apart from a sort of predifferentiated nature is part and parcel of the Platonic-Cartesian heritage that informs the whole enterprise of modernist epistemology. But as we saw in the last chapter, the linguistic turn is nothing if not the apotheosis of that tradition. The lingering intuition that the principle of human order stands in opposition to and apart from "chaos" and "indeterminacy" is much more fundamental to "Western Metaphysics" than the now discredited notion of their confluence through logos or through the mind as a "mirror of nature." From the point of view of the critique of the language paradigm as a whole, the analytic attack on subject-object epistemology and the deconstructionist critique of logocentrism are just local currents of a much deeper paradigmatic exclusion of the "primitive" (Diamond 1974, Baudrillard 1972) which draws its conceptual authority from an imaginary order of being projected from the functional model of discrete linguistic difference,

stretching from Plato's Ideas to Levi-Strauss's "floating signifier" (Levin 1984). It is this scriptographically derived, Pythagorean concept of rational discontinuities which grounds the classical concept of Reason, and sets it up in opposition to the indistinct and vagrant continuities of physical existence: body, perception, feeling, sensation, emotion, experience (all the "romantic" categories which have been split off in modern culture and submitted to such relentless attack by systems theorists, structuralists, and post-structuralists for the last thirty years).

Jacques Lacan and the Problem of Difference: the 'Letter'

There is very little doubt whatsoever that language introduces a "difference" which is fundamental to the constitution of the human order. Nor is there is any reason to dispute the claim that the acquisition of language has an enormous impact on the human organism, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically. But the formalist claim that universal structures of language determine everything we know, and the pragmatist claim that we cannot get outside of the idiosyncratic patterns imposed by our linguistic community, have no compelling basis in fact. The possibility needs at least to be entertained that linguistification is a less all-encompassing process than philosophers and humanists (and antihumanists) seem to think. Even Whorf suggested that "language, for all its kingly role, is in some sense a superficial embroidery upon deeper processes..." (239); and

Lacan is reputed to have remarked in one of his seminars that "Language is an adorning... all rhetoric, as Descartes stresses..." (Mitchell and Rose, 165). But there is no need to go to this other extreme. Language is neither the totality and origin nor the mere epiphenomenal superstructure of "true" being. What is in doubt is not the importance of language, or languages, but rather the question of whether any or all of the theories of language currently in circulation provide an adequate resource for systematic working models of everything else that humans do.

Let us pause for a moment to examine the concept of difference which has become such an important current in the linguistic climate of contemporary thought. Saussure pointed out quite correctly that different languages dissect (decouper) the world in different ways. In French, 'mouton' signifies both the animal 'sheep' and the comestible 'mutton' (115-16). Frege's distinction between reference and meaning interlocks rather nicely with the opposition between denotation and connotation (or extensional meaning and intensional meaning). Connotations and denotations vary from language to language, posing the problems of translation which concerned Quine. Whorf maintained persuasively that different languages impose different ontologies, and this culturalist perspective on reality (which is almost certainly valid to some extent), has become a kind of hard currency in philosophically informed circles. Do Melanesians and Brazilian natives, and did the Homeric

Greeks, actually perceive the same colours as do we, given that the lexicon with which their languages divide up the spectrum differs, sometimes widely, from our own?⁴ These arguments have an unmistakable trend: they say that differentiation is a fundamental feature of perception and cognition, but they tend to want to provide some formula of what difference is, and generally to define it in wholly schematic, linguistic terms, ignoring (but sometimes even denying) the significance, or even the existence, of substantive differences-- differences which can be experienced without the aid of so called systems of difference, such as binarism in language.

In recent years, however, these by now rather routine arguments have been undergoing a curious inversion, which is worth noting, because it leads into a paradoxical borderland where thoughts about language lead once again back to thoughts about nonlanguage. We may begin the story with Jacques Lacan, who was without a doubt one of the most innovative and influential theorists of the human symbolization process. For the sake of simplification, we may say that the Lacanian argument finds a kind of natural beginning in some observations made by Freud (1920, 14-17) on the early vocalizations of his grandson-- the well-known fort/da anecdote in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Freud had observed that the only thing this child liked to do with his toys was to throw them into a corner. "As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out 'o-o-o-o',

accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction." Freud realized that he was witnessing some sort of a game, and surmised that 'o-o-o-o' was really an attempt at the German word 'fort', meaning 'gone'. One day, he noticed that the boy, at eighteen months, would toss a wooden spool over the side of his cot, exclaiming 'o', and then reel it back, hailing its reappearance with a "joyful 'da' ['there']". Freud goes on:

The interpretation of the game then became obvious. It was related to the child's great cultural achievement-- the instinctual renunciation (that is the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction) which he had made in allowing his mother to go away without protesting. He compensated for this, as it were, by himself staging the disappearance and return of the objects within his reach (14,15).

Lacan glosses this passage in an interesting way. He points out that what the infant has really done is to mark a phonemic difference through the distinctive features 'o'/'a,' thereby articulating in language some recognition of the separate existence of its mother. According to Lacan, it is at this moment that "desire" is born-- when the child is "born into language": through the "articulation" of the absence of the mother, "the desire of the little child has already become the desire of another, of an alter ego who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction" (1977, 103-4). An inchoate and undifferentiated psychic state-- a state of unalloyed need ("primary narcissism")-- has begun, in Freud's grandson, to

differentiate itself through the "play" of signifiers. Through the "alternate scansion of two phonemes," the child has reached "the point of insertion of a symbolic order that pre-exists the infantile subject and in accordance with which he will have to structure himself" (1977, 234; see also Lacan 1966, 46-7).

What is at stake, in Lacan's account, is the psychogenetic discovery of difference. With the alternating vocalizations 'o-o-o' and 'da,' the child has situated itself somewhere on or about the formal transition point between two basic levels of language, as described by Roman Jakobson: the feature level, which is composed of distinctive units comprising phonemes, serving to mark the contrast between morphemes; and the semantic level, whose ultimate constituents are morphemes, which combine into the larger complex units of word, utterance, and discourse (Jakobson & Halle, 14). This is a crucial position for the child to be in, for it is the turning point of primal repression, out of which the unconscious will be "structured in the most radical way like a language," where "a material operates in it according to certain laws, which are the same laws as those discovered in the study of actual languages" (Lacan 1977, 234). In effect, the double articulation of language will be reduplicated in the double articulation of the psyche: the conscious and the unconscious.

The role of discrete elements like the phoneme in Lacanian theory is to serve as the "material" or "mass"

which is organized according to a certain kind of conceptual model, the idea of a system of "ultimate differential elements... [signifiers]... combining according to the laws of a closed order" (Lacan 1977, 152-3). However, it is not clear on which plane of the double articulation of language Lacan wishes to place the concept 'signifier.' Is it the formal level of ultimate constituents and distinctive features, (e.g., phonemes), which is governed by Jakobson's polarity principle; or the semantic level of morphemes, which is built up according to the principles of combination and selection? This ambiguity can be found everywhere in the Lacanian literature, as for example in Laplanche's statement that "it may be said that the unconscious chain is pure meaning, but one can say as well that it is pure signifier, pure non-meaning, or open to all meanings" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 161).

Leaving aside, for the moment, the concept of the phallus as the "privileged signifier,"⁵ the canonical interpretation of Lacan seems to be that the most fundamental form of the signifier (the signifier such as it acts in the deepest recess of the unconscious) is phonemic in nature (Muller & Richardson, 84-5). This view seems to be shared by all the major commentators, although there are disagreements as to the explanation of this fact, and over the semantic status of a phoneme which would also be a signifier (Lemaire 1977). According to Francois Peraldi (1988), the primary signifier can be recognized as

instituting a "minimal difference;" it "introduces a cut." At this constitutive level, the signifier is not a semantic unit; it lies, however, at the origin of psychic differentiation, and so it follows that "before [there is this minimal difference], one cannot speak of experience." Laplanche has made a similar statement, although he implies that the signified is also operative in conjunction with the primary signifiers. Drawing on Freud's "fort/da" example, he argues:

If...the opposite pair of phonemes A-O comes to symbolize for the child the presence and absence of his mother, is it not by this same movement that presence and absence are themselves constituted as the two categories in which the child's whole universe is divided, whereas previously (to the extent that one can speak of a prior time) it was wholly and without mediation satiety and void...? Reduced to the simplicity of its four terms-- presence and absence which are signified, the O and A as signifiers-- the coextention of the two systems (signifier and signified) appears in all its clarity, as does the essential fact that A refers to presence only to the extent that it refers to its phonemic opposite, O (Laplanche and Leclaire, 153-154).

Serge Leclaire (1968) has discussed the problem in some detail. The primary signifier, or "letter," according to Leclaire, is not strictly linguistic in its initial phase; it is an "abstraction of the body" (121) which becomes regulated by a phoneme. The primary experience of "pure difference" involves "a separation (ecart) [which] is fixed in the place where difference is produced, and the play of desire can unfold" (73). An erotogenic zone is thereby

established in the gap which "marks" the differential experience of pleasure and pain on the surface of the body. The letter therefore "prints" a bodily experience of alternation, allowing for its repetition in the symbolic order which "structures" the subject (Leclaire 1968, 73; Lacan 1966, 46). The primary signifier would therefore appear to have an essentially linguistic structure, since it "marks" a signified, a primitive experiential encounter with difference. But according to this perspective, the difference is inscribed for the first time on the body, which is otherwise closed in upon itself. The concept of difference is understood, therefore, as a kind of formal opening up of the experience of the body: it is essentially a narcissistic wound, a hole, gap, lack, or 'beance' which henceforth remains unfilled. It does not, therefore, really comport any recognizable form of signified, except perhaps something resembling the notion of the "object a" ('objet-petit-a'). In Lacanian theory, the object a corresponds to this primordial lack (initiated by the experience of difference) which can never be met-- but it does not constitute difference. The object to which the primary signifier may come to refer (as in the 'fort/da') is not experienced as difference, but as an assimilation to the self, through the annihilation of the difference which breaches the body in its narcissistic closure (or what Deleuze and Guattari (1977) call "the body without organs"). Its function is to fill the hole, to "hide or close this

opening." Difference exists only as an opening of the self-enclosed body, and is sustained only through schematization in the symbolic order, by means of the letter, the phoneme, the word, and the "Discourse of the Other"-- the "accession to language" which is initiated by the splitting action of the primary signifiers.

Now, the question remains: if the primitive signifier "marks" or "inscribes," is it also a sign, in the Saussurian sense? In other words, do the "letters" have 'signifieds'? And if they do, does this mean 1) that psychic process is identical with linguistic process? And 2) that the difference marked by the ontogenesis of language is a "concept" or "representation" in the mind, or perhaps even an actual 'something' in the infant's world? If the answer to these questions should be yes, then we could say that Lacan has touched upon an aspect of the child's discovery of the "semanticity hypothesis," as described by Jerome Bruner (1983) (the discovery that sounds may be meaningful). Yet such an interpretation implies a realist perspective on the unconscious function of language which Lacanians, with ample reason, reject. On Saussurian principle, meaning for Lacan is a system-derivative phenomenon; the signifiers which constitute the unconscious order of being can have no exterral point of reference: although they do inscribe a difference, they are, in and of themselves, non-signifying units (Jakobson 1942). But if primary signifiers are not signs, and not part of the logocentric order of speech, it

indeed follows that the differences which are somehow being incorporated, or projected, by the infant, are purely diacritical; they simply impose a "structure" of difference, without actually calling attention to any differences (i.e., the difference between one object and another, or between an object and the self). The psychic recognition of difference would thus depend upon the mobilization and play of a phonemic organization, as it might be conceived ideally, on the feature level of language, without semantic content.⁶

This would rule out the hypothesis (which Leclaire seems to entertain) that the articulation of phonemic differences, at least in the fort/da case, "expresses" some sort of nonlinguistic experience of difference which the psyche has already got going (and which thus serves as the precondition for a meaningful combination of formal units of signification rather than as the latter's effect). In Freud's example, there is certainly more than a pure diacritical opposition at play: the child is in some way conceptualizing, or enacting, both a perception and a psychic experience (perhaps of absence, but if so, likely in the form of a richer sensuous experience than the term 'absence' implies) which may very well have been unconscious, and probably inconsistent and unsystematic as well. But if these dimensions of the equation (perception and experience) are to be understood as derivatives of phonemic structures of opposition, as Peraldi and Laplanche seem to be saying, then the theory of the letter (the

primary signifier/phoneme) would appear to involve a causology which gives primacy to abstract forms: it assumes --or inadvertently entails-- that the psychological mode of difference-- and by extension, of symbolization-- is grounded in the schematic order of public language (as described by Saussure and Jakobson). This would indeed appear to be the view that Lacan, at one time or another, held, or induced others to hold.

On the other hand, if the 'o'/'da' opposition emerges from the child's experience, and is organized by the psychic process, as one kind or another of objectification (of what is being felt and wished) which makes intelligent use of bits of language that have been picked up (rather than the other way round), then, as Freud himself implied, the phonemic opposition has little to do with the structures or the structuration of the unconscious: it would be a classic example of secondary process elaboration. (The same can be said of Lacan's theory of metaphor and metonymy: like condensation and displacement, they cannot be basic forms of the primary process, since they are implicated in the defensive disposition, at least as Freud described it, of the dream work.) It would then follow that these primitive signifiers, the letters which are supposed to comprise the substance or material of the unconscious, would in fact be fully signifying signs, in the conventional Saussurian sense of a signifier/ signified dual unity, functioning within a "system" of signs (or differences). In short, the idea of a

non-signifying phoneme operating in the unconscious presupposes the semantic differentiation-- and the topographical differentiation into preconscious and unconscious-- it is intended to explain.⁷

More recent researches (de Villiers & de Villiers 1979) of infant vocalization reveal that a large and variable range of possible phonemic differences is employed by every three to nine month old baby, including the congenitally deaf. This capacity to produce distinctive features spontaneously will later be restricted or expanded to fit the repertoire appropriate to the infant's actual linguistic environment. Perhaps more important is the fact that neonates already distinguish and prefer the sound of the human voice. It is true that the infant has to master the phonic organization prevalent in the language community into which it is born, and it has to learn how to use discrete elements of sound in a structured way; but it would be an exaggeration to say that the babbling baby has to acquire the capacity to articulate phonemic differences as such (especially if this assimilation is understood as the precondition for the first perception of difference, the first breach in a homogeneous continuum of undifferentiated experience). The linguistic task of every infant is to transform an innate but nonschematic command of the feature level of language into a facility at the semantic level-- not by discovering difference in general but rather through broad experience of the other's language. This presupposes

a capacity to perceive and respond to differences which is informal, unsystematic, and certainly independent of the "inscription" of difference by language. In other words, the infant recognizes the reality of differences-- and "plays" with differences-- long before it learns to select the phonemes that will count in its world. What the infant never does, however, is to discover meaning for the first time by hitting upon some schematic bit of what will become its 'native' tongue-- such as 'o' and 'a.'

Neo-Structuralism and the Morbidity of Langue

The question concerning the nature, if any, of the psychic process prior to the child's integration into a language community has been prominent in psychoanalytic thought for some time. The Lacanian model of the psyche clearly sets the answer in the framework of formal linguistics. Its aim is "to identify what Freud calls the primary process-- the free flow of libidinal energy along paths of displacement and condensation-- with the fundamental laws of linguistics" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 151).⁸ This approach is of interest to us chiefly because it poses the problem of how meaning might be generated independently of the referential structure of the conventional sign and the functional ego. It still commits us to the premise that meaning is a property of language; but it leads in an interesting and unexpected direction: it suggests that to get behind the decorum of adultomorphic

patterns of signification, to discover what symbolic processes are all about, the only alternative is to dissolve meaning itself-- to strip the semantic domain entirely in order to reveal the linguistic functions that really count.

There is another way in which Lacan has influenced the discussion of symbolization. The formula, 'the unconscious is structured like a language' has generally been interpreted as if Lacan had intended a kind of analogy in which the unconscious would be the tenor and language the vehicle of an illustrative metaphor. But the formula can be turned around: it is in fact possible to read Lacan as if the converse is true-- that language, in effect, is structured like the unconscious. This is exactly what the poststructuralists have done. The reversal generates the entirely novel implication that language is drive-like-- that texts are saturated with instinctual forces. And if one carries the idea a little further, one discovers behind the linguistic structuration of desire, as Lacan describes it, the destructuring movement of the "death drive in its function as the matrix of desire" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 142).⁹

The theory of the letter established three interdependent themes for poststructuralist theory: 1) the idea of decoupage, of reduction to the discrete, of cutting up a continuous flow into meaningful (or potentially meaning-bearing) units, such as phonemes; 2) the idea of gaps, holes, blanks, nothingness, nonsignification, and various other forms of absence which are thought to constitute the

difference or discontinuity between the discrete units upon which meaning depends in the first place; and 3) the idea that the fundamental constituents of all semantic phenomena, ranging from the unconscious to the whole of a culture, can be discovered in the disintegration products of language, by subjecting discourse, or established structures of signification such as texts, to a sort of digestive process, or regressive decomposition, from whose eliminated excess the original constitutive materials may be extracted.¹⁰

If one is convinced that meaning is a property of language, it makes a certain amount of sense to look into language to see if some non-signifying, but nevertheless meaningful feature of language can be isolated, so that it can be linked up with the way that the psyche seems to work. We have already seen how Lacan attempted to define the primordial unconscious in terms of the phoneme, as a kind of atomic unit of language. Based on Jakobson's description of how the semantic function breaks down in different types of aphasia, Lacan inferred that regression to the unconscious decomposes ordinary language into primary signifiers which mark the birth of the psyche at the point where meaning itself came into being in a nonsignifying way (cf. Peraldi 1985).¹¹

Ernest Jones (1916) said that a "true" symbol, in the psychoanalytic sense (he had in mind the imagery of snakes, water, stairs, rooms, balconies, etc., which Freud discussed under the heading of dream symbolism) is always going to be

about "the most primitive ideas and interests imaginable": the body, the immediate family, birth, love, and death (102). On the face of it, this seems like a very precise formulation, but in fact it is not. Neither the range of symbols, nor the experiential field of the body, the family, birth, love, and death, nor the possible relationships between them, are determinate. This problem of indeterminacy arises from the fact that it is only by virtue of a process, laden with affect and history, that the symbolic relationship is actually established. Of course, the way in which a 'symbol' emerges and comes to stand for 'something' can be described in considerable detail, as Leclaire (1968), for example, has shown in the case of his patient Philippe; but it cannot be formalized as a universal semantic relationship. The credibility of the psychic symbol is always at least partly derived from the particular and contingent process which produced it, and with which it is redolent (as Freud discovered by means of free association). The term 'symbol' itself refers to an act of abstraction (not necessarily the analyst's), and the concept of 'representation' or "symbolic equivalence" (Jones 1916; Segal 1957) is really an abbreviation of the process of semantization from which the term 'symbol' abstracts (Levin 1987a).

Whatever one thinks about the problem of meaning-- whether one believes, with Quine, that it is a red-herring, or sides with a realist like Kripke-- there is no doubt that it is easier to get people to agree about the use of a

linguistic sign than the import of a symbolic construct. Nevertheless, even fairly straightforward bits of language, like Putnam's (1975, 139-152) "natural terms" ('tiger', 'lemon'), or the proper nouns which Russel was so fond of defining ('London', 'Napoleon'), have a tendency to interact with other words (some of them distinctly un-noun-like), to generate semantic predicaments which obscure the significations and references of analytically isolated terms. As Derrida (1967a) has remarked, "...the name, especially the so-called proper name, is always caught in a chain or system of differences" (89). Not only do persons and objects keep changing and moving around, no matter how fixed their names may be, but it is no very difficult feat to switch the "position" of a name within a "system of differences," so that the meaning of the name itself will change, regardless of the stability of its supposed link with things outside the system. Signifiers can be passed around like hot potatoes, or the empty position in a game of musical chairs, never settling down, yet always retaining a central function in the system (Levi-Strauss 1950, xlix; Lacan 1966, 11-61). Lacan thought that this characteristic -- the restless circulation of surplus or floating signifiers, which might be described as the fixed position of displacement itself-- was essential to the possibility of signification as such, and this was what he tried to convey in his theory of the 'phallus.'

As with the 'letter' and the 'signifier,' with the term

'phallus' Lacan wants, like Ernest Jones, to impart some sense of primary meaningfulness; but unlike Jones, he tries to accomplish this without recourse to conventional semantic concepts of reference, representation, or correspondence. The idea is that there is an essential and constitutive dimension of meaning (or nonmeaning) in which nothing can be meant, or comprehended, other than an intimation of meaning itself, and this is what the phallus 'represents.' The phallus, in this originary guise, alludes to a state-- the state of signification; but it does not include an actual signification: there is no idea of meaning something that can be named, pointed to, or represented. It is not, for example, the set of things called 'phallus,' with synonyms like 'penis;' nor is it a priapus, a fertility symbol, or an emblem of manhood. The phallus is more like a pure illocutionary intention, without an illocution. There is no name, and so, in a sense, there is nothing to be named-- yet there is a will to mean. Just as the Name of the Father may be like the name of naming itself, the phallus is the nonsignifying signifier that signifies signification: "the signifier intended to designate as a whole the effects of the signified, in that the signifier conditions them by its presence as a signifier" (1977, 285).

In a way, the phallus represents, for Lacan, the ultimate proper name, or to use a phrase coined by Kenneth Burke: it is a 'god-term'. It acts like a pivot around which meaning turns in a sort of cultural transcendence over

reference-- what various post-structuralist writers describe as a 'cut', a 'suture', 'hinge', a 'supplement', or a 'hymen'. The phallus names that unnamable something-- or no-thing-- which makes it possible to name anything, and moreover to tolerate the name as a substitute, without any evidence that the name corresponds to anything at all. This gets down to the limits of those factual theories of meaning, such as verification and correspondence, with which the linguistic revolution began. From the perspective of cultural symbolism (as it may reflect psychic concerns), Lacan points out that naming a child is never simply a matter of applying a conventional label for purposes of identification; it also has a symbolic function which has to do with settling the impossible question of origins. When the Name of the Father is assigned, many things are meant, but only one of them is normally susceptible to verification: the fact that the biological mother is her husband's wife. The act of "christening" rarely justifies more than a kind of cultural coherence theory of meaning.

Thus, for Lacan, the 'phallus' is quite other than the male genital organs: not the penis, but something at once more abstract and fundamental connecting the child up with the father, and by extension, the whole world of language, culture and meaning (the "Symbolic") which lies beyond the undifferentiated sphere of the mother-child relationship (the "Imaginary") (Lemaire, 92; Kristeva 1983, 42-4). Thus, through consideration of the symbolic function of naming,

Lacan is able to describe a psychosocial situation very similar to the one Freud identified as the predicament of every child (Mitchell 1974). Insofar as the psychosexual modes of existence are first encountered through the mysteries of language, we may say generally that every child is likely to be a skeptic, though this condition will normally persist mainly in the unconscious, achieving expression primarily through aesthetic forms, such as the family romance or the Oedipus myth. But the arbitrariness of the whole enterprise of naming, around which culture (according to the structuralists) is organized, threatens to disrupt the process of living at least to the extent that the father's claims fail sufficiently to convince. One doesn't have to grow up with an actual father, of course, but if the centrifugal or disseminating function of the phallus is entirely "foreclosed," the child will become psychotic (Lacan 1956; Muller 1983).

An interesting variation on this kind of reasoning has been applied to psychoanalytic theory itself by Nicolas Abraham (1968), in an article entitled "The Shell and the Kernel." Abraham argues that the topic of psychoanalysis is not the sort of thing which can actually be defined, referred to, or represented-- at least not in the normal way. Psychoanalysis is about something that is situated neither in sensory nor mental reality, but in a kind of logical 'gap' which divides the reflexive 'I' from the 'me' which is the "object" of the 'I's' self-reflection. This

paradoxical state of affairs, the dependence of awareness on the nonpresence of the self, is reflected in the central metapsychological concepts of psychoanalysis, such as 'pleasure,' 'drive,' and 'discharge.' Scientific and phenomenological discourses necessarily set out from an absence of meaning which characterizes the psychic background of all perception and cognition, but psychoanalysis goes further: it is directly concerned with the epistemological conditions of absence and nonmeaning in themselves. Metapsychological notions exist somewhere in an indeterminate region that hovers silently between the conscious subject of perception and the intentional object of knowledge. Thus, according to Abraham, psychoanalytic concepts have no reference to experience; they are the product of pure deduction, a logical inference from the difference between the self and itself which is apparently required by the phenomenon of self-observation.

The idea of pleasure is a case in point. As Freud adumbrated it, pleasure does not fit into the inverted commas ('pleasure') which conventionally signify the phenomenological object of subjective experience. (How does the moral masochist "experience" the unconscious pleasure which motivates the conscious experience of pain?) Nor does pleasure coincide with the underlying physiological object of medical and behavioural science. As Leclaire (1968, 69-70) has said, "the order of pleasure is inscribed in counterpoint to the organic order... and constitutes the

latter's subversion."¹² Abraham's proposal is to designate this other, psychoanalytic kind of pleasure with a capital 'P.' The terms Pleasure, Drive, Discharge, and so on, all suggest the subversive quality of absence. Abraham's point is not that Freud's metapsychological concepts possess some kind of supraordinate meaning, but rather that (like the Name of the Father or the phallus) they lack meaning, since they 'refer' to the domain of the unconscious, which is alien to the conceptual world of subjects, objects, reference, and representation which constitute meaning in the ordinary linguistic sense. Capitalizing metapsychological names is therefore nothing more than a way of conventionally indicating that, in order to get an idea of what they are about, the terms must be reduced to the status of the orphaned signifiers that play without signifieds in the unconscious, like the fractured speech of the aphasic.

Abraham's conclusion is that such terms as Pleasure, Discharge, and Unconscious are "antisemantic" or "anasemic" in character. They open up contradictory moments in the unfolding of the Freudian text, holes which cannot be filled, gaps which defy logical or referential explication. They "signify nothing... if not the silence which founds every act of signification" (Abraham 1968, 209). One discovers them by pulling on the loose threads in the weave of psychoanalytical discourse. Like the Drive or the non-experience of Discharge, metapsychological Pleasure with a capital 'P' is neither palpable nor describable. It is a

kind of conceptual excess, a trace, or inverted manifestation of a "non-presence" which is only dimly sensed, and never perceived in the phenomenological format: it alludes to the non-signifying "kernel" which lies veiled behind the signifying "shell" of social and philosophical discourse-- from which it follows that "one cannot assign psychoanalysis a determinate place within the order of the sciences" (208).¹³

Freud spoke of the world of the unconscious as an "other scene" (ein andere Schauplatz)-- a kind of underground theatre where consciousness never ventures. This second venue, where the real dramas of psychological life are staged, has its own principles of performance, its own order and regalia, which cannot be comprehended, except in glimpses afforded by remembered dreams, symptoms, and parapraxes. Freud emphasized that the interpretation of the dream requires that the manifest content of the dream be broken down into elements, and that each element be pursued on its separate path toward the unconscious dream thoughts. He insisted that the connections between the dream elements be ignored (for example, the narrative sequence of the dream) except insofar as the dream elements happen to intertwine on their various associative paths. These technical recommendations on interpretation were based on the fact that unconscious thought processes are never directly expressed, even by means of a code. The link between the latent and the manifest dream thoughts is

circuitous and disjointed at the best of times. But if such phenomena of discontinuity are generalized into a hypothesis about the ontological structure of the unconscious, it becomes possible to treat the latent dream thoughts, or any other unconscious process, as an entirely separate "text." The signifier may then be described in terms of the action of a double inscription in the psyche, engendering two distinct orders of language, corresponding roughly, as we saw earlier, to the level of the phoneme and the level of the semanteme, as described by Jakobson (Laplanche & Leclaire, 130f; 160f); or (as we shall see) the Semiotic and the Symbolic, as described by Kristeva; or the order of absence and the order of presence, as described by Derrida.

It should be noted, however, that neither the internal coherence of the manifest content of the dream, nor its external context is dissolved completely in the process of interpretation, as Freud's own analysis of the dream of Irma's injection confirms (Erikson 1954). The same is true of poststructuralist techniques of interpretation.

(Derrida's readings, particularly his treatment of Rousseau [Derrida 1967a], amply demonstrate the inevitability of regard for the text as it stands, as well as the dependence of interpretation on secondary sources of information.)

What happens in both cases-- dream interpretation and deconstruction--is that the text is isolated and idealized-- not destroyed. The logic of this procedure is captured very well in the technical distinction proposed by Laplanche and

Leclaire between "the attitude of simultaneous translation" and "the attitude of attention to lacunary phenomena" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 124f.). The attitude of simultaneous translation draws on the assumption that there is some relationship of correspondence between the signifier presented in the manifest dream, and what it signifies. To some extent this allows the interpreter to take the text for granted, to adopt it as an instrumental framework which guides attention elsewhere-- presumably toward the unconscious signifieds or referents of the text. In contrast, the attitude of attention to lacunary phenomena does not presuppose the availability of a signified to justify the signifier; it requires all attention to be drawn to the internal coherence of the text itself. The text is idealized in the sense that it is expected to agree with itself, down to the slightest particular; it is interrogated according to rigorous rules of consistency which will inevitably reveal some lapse, and it is precisely the lapse, the lacuna, the "radical ambiguity of the letter," which will reveal an opening to what is latent in the text, and lead to the discovery of "a second structure in which these lacunary phenomena find their unity independently of the [manifest] text" (Laplanche and Leclaire, 131).

Jacques Derrida (1967b, 196-231) has argued that the 'other scene' of Freud's primary process is essentially the "scene of writing." In Freud's day, the empiricist theory of "sense impressions" was still very influential, especial-

ly through the works of Mach. Freud, whose formal medical training was in neurology, engaged in elaborate speculations about the underlying significance of registering memory traces and 'grooving' neural pathways.¹⁴ In Derrida's view, this problematic of inscription, in which the psyche appears as "a configuration of traces...[,] can no longer be represented except by the structure and functioning of writing" (200). According to Derrida, the ontological characteristics of writing determine all manifestations of language and experience by exercising a "force of rupture" on manifest discourse (Derrida 1977, 181-2). This potential for breaching syntactic and semantic structure, latent in the "general graphematic structure of all 'communication'" (193), constitutes (or consists of) an "essential absence" which serves as the precondition of signification, the basis upon which meaning in general is originally founded and reproduced.

The conceptual model of writing, with its ruling metaphor of a system of marks, graphs, and traces, gaps, margins, and lacunae, has come to replace the "phonocentric" ideas of traditional linguistics in poststructuralist thought (Derrida 1967a, 27-73). Lacan is often criticized for reducing the unconscious to the phonetic model, thus privileging the metaphysical concept of 'speech' (a self in touch with or 'present' to itself). However, the "letter" is essentially a graphomorphic figure, and so the post-structuralist theory of writing may be seen as a consistent development of the Lacanian emphasis on inscribing, marking,

and positioning as the primary framework of the symbolic process. Structuralism and poststructuralism are both fundamentally concerned with the same demonstration: that subjective experience is an epiphenomenal by-product of an impersonal and objective imprinting process. But in spite of the fact that poststructuralist thought remains thoroughly semiomorphic-- as dependent ultimately on the formal concept of the sign as Lacan's letter-- the idea of écriture has with some justification become the vehicle of an important new effort to conceptualize nonlanguage, particularly through the attempt to represent (as it were) figures of semantic indeterminacy, or what Abraham calls anasemia, by means of subversive strategies of composition which have a catabolic effect on the normal structures of signification and the "rules of language."¹⁵

According to the philosopher Rudolph Gasche, "Only psychoanalysis forces language to speak the nonlanguage conditions of speech" (Derrida 1982, 112). Just as the letter "speaks" nonmeaning in the discourse of the analysand, writing embodies the absence of differentiation upon which articulation is constructed. A similar notion of the anasemic origins of signification appears in a clinical vignette from Wilfrid Bion. Of a very regressed patient, he remarked that

'writing' preceded not talking only but thinking. His actual speech was incomprehensible if I tried to unravel it by applying my knowledge of ordinary words and grammar. It became more meaningful if I thought of it as doodling in sound

.... His speech did not qualify as verbal communication...[but] as an attempt to establish thought, because... the objects [words and phrases believed by him to be embodied in the objects in the room] were being used as signs to make thinking possible about objects that were not present (Bion 1963, 38).¹⁶

Bion's allusion to infantile babbling in this account of the regressive state of his patient may be compared to Freud's speculations on the "fort/da"; and his attempt to describe it in terms of a primordial writing is reminiscent of the problematic of the "letter," as the following comments from Michael Eigen (1985, 323) on Bion's patient seem to reveal:

The psychotic patient...utters what appear to be meaningless patterns of sound. The subject believes he can see these patterns as or in the objects in the room. That is, Bion's patient is convinced that his sounds are connected to or even create the objects he sees.... As Bion puts it, this person utters actual objects, not simply phrases. On the one hand the chaos of his utterances reflect[s] a de- or un-forming and utterly obliterating catastrophic state approaching an entropy of sense. However, this patient also has the possibility of learning about himself by observing the objects he speaks. He has the possibility of meaning something by noting the nothing he tries to create

Julia Kristeva (1984) has tried to account for this "entropy of sense" in terms of what she has called the "semiotic chora," relating it to the "destructuring and asignifying machine of the unconscious," which tends to "deviate from syntactic or predicative closure" (17, 32). In Kristeva's terminology, the Semiotic must be understood as a force, "anterior to sign and syntax" (29), acting in

interdependent opposition to the "Symbolic." The Symbolic in turn comprises the whole sphere of intentional meaning, propositional logic, and cultural coding. Thus, the semiotic chora both sustains and ruptures the conventional order of language: "Indifferent to language, enigmatic and feminine, this space underlying the written is rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation" (29).

The semiotic is articulated by flows and marks: facilitation, energy transfers, the cutting up of the corporal and social continuum as well as that of signifying material, the establishment of a distinctiveness and its ordering in a pulsating chora, in a rhythmic but non-expressive totality. [It is also] [t]he functioning of writing, the trace, and the gramme...a heterogeneous functioning which Freud called "psychosomatic"(40-1)

In the "space underlying the written" is the energy of the drive, infusing language with the rhythm and dynamic of the psychosomatic body, "which is on a path of destruction, aggressivity, and death" (28). This "desire in language" is the articulated form of a constitutive principle of negativity, what Derrida (1967a) calls "the irreducible absence within the presence of the trace" (47), which structures meaning, while at the same time splitting it up and reducing it to stasis (131, 141). It is precisely the gap-- the spacing between signifiers, the empirical lack of meaning, the disintegration-- that makes meaning possible, in the same way that there can be no perception for the Gestalt psychologist without splitting the perceptual field

into figure and ground. "This force of rupture is tied to the spacing that constitutes the written sign: spacing which separates it from other elements of the internal contextual chain...but also from all other forms of present referenceThis spacing is not the simple negativity of a lacuna but rather the emergence of the mark. It does not remain, however...in the service of meaning...."(Derrida 1977, 182).

The poststructuralist substantialization of the lacuna is not intended to suggest that the trace contains a "meaning" to be unlocked, in the sense of a signified or a referent: it does not entail a "presence," a thing or idea in the mind, an object or a sensation localized in awareness. There is only a breach, the "pre-opening of the ontic-ontological difference" (Derrida 1967b, 198), a kind of unalloyed anteriority, a "pure difference" which, by virtue of its purity, may neither coincide nor differ from itself-- it is an otherness without other. Like Lacan's phallus, the trace only does its work when veiled, or to use Derrida's phrase, 'meaning' must be placed "under erasure." Just as the 'fort/da' game deploys an active repetition which sustains a difference through negativity and oscillation, the emptiness of the trace constitutes meaning by creating an interval which delays conjoinment of signifier and signified, thus engendering a metonymic concatenation of signifiers which can never come to a final resting place without complete loss: the death of meaning. ["It is thus delay which is at the beginning" (1967b, 203).]

This production of difference through deferral is what Derrida calls differance: it "produces what it forbids, makes possible the very thing that it makes impossible" (1967a, 143).¹⁷ "The specular dispossession which at the same time institutes and deconstitutes me is also a law of language. It operates as a power of death in the heart of living speech: a power all the more redoubtable because it opens up as much as it threatens the possibility of the spoken word" (1967a, 141).¹⁸

Death, according to Lacan, is "primordial to the birth of symbols."¹⁹ As the 'fort/da' case was intended to illustrate, meaning only arises in structures of repetition, which are ultimately governed by the drives. As Freud surmised, in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, "an instinct [Trieb=drive] is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things...; it is...the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life" (1920, 36). Derrida asks: "Is it not already death at the origin of a life which can defend itself against death only through an economy of death, through deferment, repetition, reserve...? [L]ife protects itself by repetition, trace, differance.... But... there is no life present at first which would then...reserve itself in differance. The latter constitutes the essence of life. Or rather: as differance is not an essence...it is not life...." (1967b, 202-3). Through the movement of differance, death "makes the opposition of presence and absence possible" (1967a, 143). The "void of the death

drive" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 142), like a kind of "prior medium in which differentiation in general is produced" (1972b, 126), opens out at the moment of castration (which is "always at play" [336]), when the subject is constituted in relation to the signifier (the phallus): "The death-drive is that radical force, usually fixed and fixating, which surfaces in a catastrophic or ecstatic instant, at the point where the organic coherence of the subject in his body appears for what it is, unnamable or inexpressible, swoon or ecstasy, shouting its appeal for a word to veil and sustain it" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 143).²⁰

Conclusion

The speculations on the origins of symbolic process we have been reviewing in this chapter are drawn from one of the most influential bodies of thinking about the nature of the semantic to emerge in the late modern era. They have much to recommend them; yet they rely for their ultimate justification on a few spectacular misconceptions, which may be enumerated as follows:

- 1) difference is a formal property of a system;
- 2) particularities can be grasped only in a general, conceptual way, by means of negation ('p' and 'not-p'), which positions them in the system of binary or dialectical oppositions which enables us to perceive them in the first place;²¹

- 3) all forms of differentiation are derived from the

segmental effects of language, and depend upon the acquisition of language.

To these structuralist presuppositions, which may be counted as typical features of the moderate version of the language paradigm, some characteristic post-structuralist metaphysical elaborations should be added:

4) the act of differentiation-- and therefore of symbolization-- necessarily presupposes a lapsarian condition of loss and separation ('castration'), in which an original, but fictional, plenary state is forever and "always already" being displaced and fragmented;

5) the process of symbolization is fundamentally entropic, a detour deferring relapse into the ground of nonmeaning, disorder, and death.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the logic which gives priority to the death instinct as the foundation of psychic process arises from an internal contradiction in the metapsychological concept of pleasure. The principle of equilibrium or constancy toward which the pleasure principle is thought to strive tends to become identified with the ego which opposes itself to the primary process in the flight from pain. From this point of view, creativity in the constructive sense becomes associated with the secondary process. Given the assumption that order must be defined as the negative of disorder-- that all forms of organization (sense perception, affect, cognition, as well as practical calculation, object relations, and memory) can be equated in

their common opposition to primary undifferentiation-- it seems to follow that any attempt to discover the logic of symbolization in something beyond the secondary process must ally itself with the catabolic force of the death instinct.

As Laplanche (1970) has shown in his brilliant study of metapsychology, the concept of the death drive plays on a certain "slippage" between states of organic equilibrium, states of drive satisfaction, and states of utter inertia. There is a qualitative difference between the optimal level of tension which belongs to repose among the quick, and the complete absence of innervation characterizing the oblivion of the dead.

Freud defined the death instinct as the drive to return to an original inorganic state of being which preceded life. He equated this force pushing "beyond the pleasure principle" with the inherently regressive pull of all the drives, and with psychic phenomena of repetition. The deconstructionists have carried the equation a step further, finding in the recursive phenomena of signification, and in the iterability or repeatability which is a precondition of signification in general, symptoms of the entropic structure of all semantic phenomena. It is important to remember, however, that repetition and redundancy do not in themselves entail an irreversible linear regression, least of all to the zero point of inorganic stasis that the death instinct implies. To repeat is not necessarily to return to a former state-- as Derrida himself demonstrated with regard to the

memory trace: it is the composite reenactment of the past in the play of the present (Derrida 1967b, 196-231; see also Lichtenstein 1935). The fact of disappointment and even anger about the impermanence of pleasurable states certainly implies a wish to restore earlier states of being, and even to make them "eternal." Such ideas are basic to psychoanalysis, and a theory of the symbolic process ignores them at its peril. But striving to recapture memories and myths of former pleasure does not require us to believe that before the psyche achieved consciousness (enabling it to theorize about these matters), it existed as an unprocessed state of bliss, or that symbolization is really a technique for diverting and delaying a fundamental drive to restore the insensate void. As Ehrenzweig (1967) argues, dedifferentiation is not necessarily the equivalent of inorganic chaos; and as Winnicott demonstrated, unintegration is not the same thing as disintegration or catastrophic chaos.

The confusion between "anasemia"-- the maximization of indeterminacy or undifferentiation-- on the one hand, and thermodynamic heat death on the other, is not exclusive to post-structuralist philosophy. Increasing thermodynamic entropy refers objectively to increasing uniformity in the distribution of thermal energy throughout a physical system; whilst entropy in statistical mechanics measures a decrease in our knowledge of the internal organization of a thermodynamic system. Both imply loss of capacity for conversion of thermal into mechanical energy. In contrast,

entropy in information theory indicates an increase-- not a decrease-- in the potential information available from a source: it is really a measure of the probability of a certain message. The more likely the message, the less interesting it will be when it arrives, and so the lower the 'quantity' of potential information, and thus of entropy. Entropy in information theory is not an objective measure of the disorder or undifferentiation of a system; nor is it a measure of our lack of knowledge about such systems. In fact, high entropy in terms of information theory implies low thermodynamic entropy, since less predictable message sources are likely to be complex, highly differentiated, open and reversible energy systems. Nevertheless, these very distinct technical senses of the term entropy are often confounded, partly because the mathematics of information theory and statistical mechanics are formally related. But the underlying concepts have to do with quite different processes in the natural world.

There is no compelling reason why suspending secondary process organization of signification and perception should be conceived as a regression (phylogenetic or ontological) leading ultimately to a terminus in undifferentiated narcissistic enclosure or inorganic chaos. If it is a question of psychological regression, that is a different matter; but as Marion Milner (1952, 1955) has shown, even the catastrophic collapse of ego boundaries is likely to reveal some other pattern of personal experience.

Dedifferentiation and fragmentation are inherent in the rhythm of the secondary process itself, and to use Ehrenzweig's Gestalt terminology, the perception of the figure (signification) does not necessarily require the oblivion of the ground, or vice versa.

The possibility of living the same life simultaneously through quite different and even incompatible orderings hardly justifies a discourse of metaphysical absence and nothingness. Order is not an inherently good (or bad) thing that exists only because it is the opposite of an inherently bad (or good) thing called 'disorder.' Nor is being a conceptual derivative of nonbeing; and by the same token, meaning survives quite comfortably without the arch enemy nonmeaning to constitute and undermine it at the same time.

If there has arisen, in the Twentieth Century, what might be called an overly positivistic conception of language-- a view of language as a kind of noise reduction device in a cybernetic system-- then the deconstructionists are right to try to bring some of the noise back into language. The problem with deconstruction lies in its failure to recognize that the confusion it discovers within signification is only entropic in relation to the extreme formalism of its starting premises, which are the same as the positivist's and the analytic philosopher's. The breakdown of ordinary language is not tantamount to the failure of meaning, and the gaps which words cannot fill do not constitute the failure of human desire. Once this

confusion has been cleared away, we see that these are exactly the insights which emerge from Kristeva's discussion of the chora, or if Derrida prefers, Democrites' concept of rythmos (Derrida 1972a, 75; 106, n.39): there are many different patterns, forms, and orders of experience to choose between and create; and there is nothing so definitive and final as nothingness, or nonmeaning-- or the death instinct-- to relieve us of the responsibility for our choices and creations by making them seem trivial and interchangeable by comparison.

In the previous chapter, it was pointed out that the anti-foundationalism of post-structuralist philosophy makes no claim to truth; but the same philosophy demonstrates that it is in the very nature of thought and language to generate privileged concepts and intimations of truth. This insight applies to the speculations of the language paradigm itself. The intellectual passage from Roman Jakobson and Claude Levi-Strauss to Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida reveals a trend toward the absolute-- a gradual but unmistakable shift towards an ontological interpretation of technical linguistic methodology. In the early stages of what eventually came to be known as the linguistic turn, language began to lose its referential and representational power-- but this was precisely the sacrifice required to raise language to its preeminent position in contemporary thought. The decline of semantic realism has been complemented by an increasing realism of verbal form. Words may no longer

refer to things; but in their place, theoretical models of language have become hyper-referential: the forms and "laws" of language-- what the analytic philosophers call "the whole of language"-- have taken over the burden of representation. Everything refers back to an abstract Gestalt, in which the pure concepts of linguistics are thought to embody the dynamic substance of all possible experience.

When the language paradigm is pushed to this stage of transcendental realism, it requires some concept of unity in variety to sustain itself. It needs a difference, or death instinct-- a foundation which, because it must remain within the formal structure of language, is at the same time not a foundation: something like Jacob Boehme's "eternal Ungrund."

This is why the speculative metapsychology of the death instinct is so appealing. It seems to permit a kind of "spatialization of time, freezing of becoming" (Leclaire 1980, 110). The ground of transcendental linguistics would be both the origin and the death of meaning, a kind of inertia in motion, a mobilization of stasis: the letter, difference, the "pure trace" and "arche-writing": "It marks the dead time within the presence of the living present..." -- "anterior to the distinction between regions of sensibility, anterior to the distinction between sound and light...." (Derrida 1987a, 68, 65).

As we saw during the discussion of the letter as the pure trace of difference, the linguistic model of nonlanguage requires a concept of otherness without

disclosure, contrast without perception, a kind of boundariless opening or mark. For Lacan, this state of unsealed unity or enclosure is at the same time the corps morcele-- the body in pieces, devoid of cortical control, disconnected and uncoordinated, a field of discontinuous experience which is at the same time homogeneous and impenetrable from the outside-- just as Freud's baby was at one and the same time a self-sufficient unity and a heterogeneous, polymorphous perverse bundle of drives. To think the concept of the trace, a psychic situation must be imagined in which there are no objects-- only the possibility of pure differences, or nothing at all.

For a difference to be pure, it must be the same as itself, exclusive of all differences; yet this difference must also contain within itself the traces of the same, since without them, it would be purely and simply the same as itself, and different from nothing at all. One can go many times round in circles like this when the digital logic of discrete binary oppositions is imposed upon the analogical world of drives, psychosomatic perception, and affect. As we shall see in later chapters, the paradoxes thus generated have a certain affinity with the conceptual structure of the classical theory of primary narcissism, which hypothesizes that the advent of meaning is delayed until the developmental stage of language acquisition. On the surface, and to its credit, post-structuralist philosophy appears to maintain the body in a primary position, in

its 'materiality,' as the ultimate source of meaning. But the attempt, by means of verbal paradox, to think the origin of meaning in difference, the pure trace, the letter, the phallus, the primary signifier without a signified, and so on, can only lead away from the body, for it presupposes the reduction of the body to the linguistically-derived forms which are thought to "constitute" the body's meaning in the first place-- to "produce" the sensory differences of the psychic process and the experience of the object as secondary effects, as epiphenomena-- concatenations of pure difference. The Lacanian theory of language-- the letter, the phallus, and all of their offshoots (writing, trace, difference)-- may be interpreted as the reductio ad absurdum of a long tradition of speculation which has tried, since Plato and Locke, to mediate an artificial opposition between insensate muteness (the supposed condition of the infant) and systematic culture (the alleged condition of the adult). We shall review this tradition in the next chapter but one. In what immediately follows, however, we shall take a closer look at the fundamental principles of classical metapsychology, to see what they offer a theory of symbolization.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. See Guntrip (1971), who makes the dependence of object relations theory on ego psychology explicit.

2. Jean Baudrillard (1976) has provided an interesting analysis of how this problematic of simulation has progressed since the Renaissance. See also Gilles Deleuze (1969, 297): "The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, whereas the simulacrum is an image without resemblance. The catechism, inspired as it is by Platonism, has familiarized us with this notion: God made man in His image to resemble Him, but through sin man has relinquished this resemblance, while retaining the image. We have become simulacra-- we have relinquished moral existence in order to enter into an aesthetic existence. The...catechism... stresses the demonic character of the simulacrum. Undoubtedly, the simulacrum produces an effect of resemblance; but this is... entirely external, produced by means quite different from those at work within the model."

3. One of the unfortunate side-effects, in my opinion, of the language paradigm in the humanities and social sciences is that its implicit, creationist metaphysics make the interpretation of evidence in the "sociobiology debate" sound equally flimsy on both sides of the argument.

4. For a discussion of the relationship between colour perception, Basic Color Terms, and cultural coding, see Marshall Sahlins (1976, 198-203; 1977). For a more general discussion of the relationships between cognitive processing and cultural variation, see Cole and Scribner (1974).

5. "The phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined with the advent of desire" (Lacan 1977, 287).

6. As reported in Cole and Scribner (57), there is some evidence that linguistic features, such as the difference between hard and soft consonants, round and flat vowels, do have semantic content. Subjects can identify semantic opposites, such as hot and cold, in unfamiliar languages, solely on the basis of sound, at a better than chance rate. These findings coincide with Heinz Werner's concept of "physiognomic" perception. Cf. Jakobson (1942, 113): "Owing to the neuropsychological laws of synaesthesia, phonic oppositions can themselves evoke relations with musical, chromatic, olfactory, tactile, etc. sensations. For example, the opposition between acute and grave phonemes has the capacity to suggest an image of bright and dark, of pointed and rounded, of thin and thick, of light and heavy, etc. This 'sound symbolism'..., this inner value of the distinctive features, although latent, is brought to life as

soon as it finds a correspondence in the meaning of a given word and in our emotional or aesthetic attitude towards this word and even more towards pairs of words with two opposite meanings."

7.The equivocation on these points has been summed up by Lemaire (1977), in her commentary on Lacan: "...it is still unclear whether the unconscious englobes the signifier in its materiality, as an acoustic image or a letter, or whether it englobes the signifier as the presentation in thought of the thing, or even whether both elements of the linguistic sign are present, but without having, as they do in conscious language, at least a certain fixed relationship which restricts the 'floating' of the meaning of the symbols" (99).

8.One of the "laws" of linguistics Laplanche is referring to here is Jakobson's mistaken belief that all language functions on two axes: that of metaphor and that of metonymy. For a critical discussion of this theory, see Maria Ruegg (1979).

9.It is through the equation of Freud's displacement with Jakobson's metonymic axis of language that Lacan and the poststructuralists are able to derive the dynamic principles of psychic life from within the structures of language itself. Derrida in particular spells out the notion that this desire is a function of discontinuity and "rupture." As Lacan says, "it is castration that governs desire," and the "I as subject comes on the scene...by a discourse in which it is death that sustains existence" (1977, 323, 300).

10.To these may be added: 4) the "sublimation" of the concrete into the abstract, and the "sublation" of the body into the sign, the logic of inscription, or "writing" (Levin 1987b).

On the themes of generativity and its perverse negation (the reduction of the body to excrement), and the concept of excrement as an irreducible excess resistant to all analysis and dialectic, see Gallop (1981) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1984), both excellent discussions representing ideologically opposing views.

11."[T]he disintegration of the sound pattern...exhibits a time order of great regularity. Aphasic regression has proved to be a mirror of the child's acquisition of speech sounds: it shows the child's development in reverse" (Jakobson & Halle 1956, 71).

12.The distinction drawn here between the phenomenological concept of pleasure and metapsychological pleasure corresponds to Lacan's distinction between need, which is physiologically based, and desire, which is Symbolic. The difference and relationship between need and desire is well

illustrated by Leclaire in his analysis of Philippe's dream of the unicorn. The dream expressed a latent wish to drink, which corresponded both to an actual thirst (an organic insufficiency brought on by overconsumption of salt the previous evening) and to a much more elaborate symbolic thirst, which related to the dreamer's Oedipal strivings. For discussion of the dream in relation to the problem of need and desire, see Leclaire (1968, 99-117), and also, Laplanche & Leclaire, 139f., 186f.

13. The same sentiment is expressed by Leclaire (1968). Discussing the difficulty of establishing a definite theory of psycho-analysis, he states: "...cette theorie est difficile d'etablir pour autant que la psychanalyse ne saurait d'aucune facon s'accomoder d'une formalisation close (ce qui vise par sa nature l'effort commun de theorisation), sous peine d'exclure, ipso facto, de son champ, la possibilite meme de l'analyse a la recherche de l'extreme singularite" (26).

14. On the popularity of the trace metaphor of memory in neurophysiology, Oatley (1978) makes the following comment: "... the real point is that storage...is not necessarily a complex process.... A scratch on a table where I cut a slice of bread... is a memory of that event.... It is that kind of change which is being referred to in discussions of the physiological basis of memory. But if I were to see a scratch on a table and interpret it as an indication of an event that occurred when someone was cutting a slice of bread, I could only reconstruct that event if I happened to know about bread, and serrated breadknives, the conventions of behaviour in that type of household and many other things. Without a theory about domestic arrangements and utensils in the kind of house where the table was, no one would be able to interpret the mark on the table, or 'remember,' that is to say reconstruct, the actual event. This example may not be a bad metaphor of human memory. It is not the process of storage, the physical change produced by an event, that is difficult to understand. That indeed is rather trivial. It is the organization of such stored signs and their interpretation which are difficult to comprehend" (99-100).

15. For the poststructuralist view on this question of the 'rules' of meaning in relation to 'writing,' see Derrida (1977), and Searle's reply (1977). Both authors agree that meaning is a matter of the rules and conventions, the "coded" nature of language, which make "iterability" and quotation possible. See also Foucault (1971, 79-107).

The major dissent from the poststructuralist quest to articulate the "nonmeaning" of language, or the nonlanguage conditions of language, is Michel Foucault, who remained a resolutely positivistic sociological thinker in all his works. In The Archaeology of Knowledge he states: "it is

vain to seek, beyond structural, formal, or interpretive analyses of language, a domain that is at last freed from all positivity, in which the freedom of the subject...could be fulfilled. One should not object to linguistic methods or logical analyses: 'When you have said so much about the rules of its construction, what do you do with language itself...? What do you do with this freedom, or with this meaning that is prior to all signification, without which individuals could not understand one another in the never-ending work of language...?' Such objections must be set aside: for if it is true that there is a dimension there that belongs neither to logic nor to linguistics, it is not, for all that, a restored transcendence, nor a way that has been reopened in the direction of an inaccessible origin, nor a creation by the human being of his own meanings" (Foucault 1972, 112-13).

16. It should be noted that in the British psychoanalytic tradition there would be an obvious link between Bion's "doodling in sound" and Winnicott's technique of the "squiggle game" in the psychoanalytic therapy of children.

17. In the same perpetual slippage of the signifier, Derrida's (1968) *différance*, neither word nor concept, becomes (1972b) "dissemination" and "hymen," together with a host of other terms. Like the relationship, in Lacan's thought, between the phallus in the Symbolic and the penis in the Real, dissemination evokes the impossibility that the signifier (or *seme[n]*) should ever reach its referential goal, without destroying the possibility of meaning (or reproduction). Semination is always dissemination, production is always reproduction. Or, to put it in more Lacanian terms, but still quoting Derrida: "Castration is always already at play" (1972b, 302).

18. In this formulation, Derrida echoes the epistemological structure of Lacan's theory of the "mirror phase," another and later beginning.

19. Lacan (1966, 105): "So when we wish to attain in the subject what was before the serial articulations of speech, and what is primordial to the birth of symbols, we find it in death, from which his existence takes on all the meaning it has. It is in effect as a desire for death that he affirms himself for others: if he identifies himself with the other, it is by fixing him solidly in the metamorphosis of his essential image, and no being is ever evoked by him except among the shadows of death.... To say that this mortal meaning reveals in speech a centre exterior to language is more than a metaphor; it manifests a structure...an annulus."

20. Laplanche & Leclaire, 144: "...the death-drive surfaces without ever being seen.... [It] constitutes the 'bedrock,' the foundation of the castration complex... it allows the development and the organization of the sexual drives.... it imperiously gives rise to the development and structuring of language."

21. The negative dialectics of abstract opposition are discussed by Kristeva (1974, 107-164).

CHAPTER FIVE

THINKING THROUGH THE HUNGRY BABY:

PLEASURE, PAIN, AND 'REALITY'

We all... accepted rather literally the then dominant tenet of psycho-analytic metapsychology: that... gratification-frustration were necessary and sufficient criteria for ego development and needed no further qualification (Mahler 1983).

Thinking

From the outset, we have been assuming that thinking is more or less coextensive with psychic process, but this implies a very broad definition which conflicts with many, though not all, psychoanalytic formulations about mental activity. Freud held that parts of psychic activity are in fact subterranean to thinking, in particular the direct action of the drives, and the most basic organismic responses to them. He tended to view thinking as the by-product of fundamental forms of ontogenetic strife arising from the pressure of vital needs. It is as if Freud assumed that the development of the individual capacity to think-- and therefore to symbolize-- must be a recapitulation of the phylogenetic evolution of the same capacity. He may have been right.

Psychoanalytic metapsychology began with a dichotomy between the instinctual drives (or the representatives of the drives in the unconscious) on one side, and the various contents of consciousness [thinking] on the other, which it treated as secondary derivative phenomena. According to this

view, the forms of consciousness and perception have to be won over from the drives in a long struggle during which more or less free-floating instinctual energy is 'bound,' 'neutralized,' or sublimated. Although the contents of the system Cs-Pcpt are not by any means produced holus bolus by the drives (their derivatives, compromises, etc.), they are nevertheless strongly influenced by the drives, and ultimately get their energy from them. Anna Freud stated this position very clearly when she wrote that psychoanalysis "ascribes to the innate instincts the main role in shaping the personality. It is the claim of the instinctual urges on the mind which results in the development of new functions, the so-called ego functions" (A. Freud 1949, 490). This point of view, that conscious thinking and perception are only the manifest dimension of a much vaster process, is fundamental to psychoanalysis, no matter which way one carves up the conceptual landscape.

Toward the end of his life, in his article "On Negation," Freud appeared to suggest another approach, based on the fact that to deny something is implicitly to accept that it might be true. A spontaneous denial can be an indication that an idea is on the fringe of consciousness. To the extent that this is the case, the act of denial may be seen as a kind of foreshadowing or schematic nucleus of the thinking process.

The role of the negative has been a significant theme in the history of philosophy (Burke 1966), but in Freud it

takes on a very specific character. For Freud the fundamental negative in human thought lies not in the logical and epistemological negation made possible by language, or in the digital negative of binary coding, or the reversibility of arithmetical operations, but in the analogical and emotional expression of unpleasure. Even before teething, the infant body has a considerable repertoire in this register: withdrawal, head-turning, crying, pushing, kicking, spitting, and regurgitation, not to mention more subtle methods of facial, vocal, gestural, and postural variation. Freud's reasoning about the negative leads to the idea that thinking, in its primal human form, is precisely an attempt, as yet unpracticed and inefficient, to refuse to perceive or to accept-- a kind of inarticulate desire not to know, which has no directly logical or linguistic form. In a brilliant elaboration of Freud's ideas on this subject, the developmental psychoanalytic psychologist Renee Spitz (1957) proposed that the capacity to refuse-- to say 'no'-- represents the first emotionally organised differentiation of the self from the other; but he dated this in the second year of life, with the advent of language.

Because denial implies an affective rather than logical or grammatical no, it permits one to speculate that "affects" (or in other words, emotions and feelings) are a primary form of thinking. This is the route taken by the Kleinian school, and many of the psychoanalytic writers who

call themselves 'object-relations' theorists. In accordance with the classical drive theory, Kleinians tend to treat rationality in the conventional sense as a kind of secondary mental process, the product of psychodynamic push and pull. As Wilfrid Bion (1970, 1) put it, "Reason is emotion's slave and exists to rationalize emotional experience." But an emotion is not quite the same thing as a drive. The classical metapsychological view places affect on roughly the same plane as a potentially conscious thought: it can be suppressed, made unconscious, but not in its articulate form. Emotions are discharge phenomena-- expressions in consciousness of the drive, or compromises between drive and defence. They do not exist as such "in the unconscious."¹ Melanie Klein felt otherwise, and seems to have blurred Freud's distinction between drive and affect, and although her work does nothing to solve the conceptual problems of psychoanalytic metapsychology, it has to some extent pre-adapted the psychoanalytic movement to the emerging evidence that emotional experience is a primary psychological datum, and not in itself a phenomenal by-product of drive development. (We shall return to this point in the next two chapters, when I shall review systematic and experimental evidence on infant cognition, social interaction, and psychological development.)

Clinical psychology and metapsychology are by no means identical in psychoanalytic theory (G. Klein 1976; Atwood & Stolorow 1984). In Freud's earliest psychoanalytic

writings, he placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the defensive separation of thought and feeling in the formation of symptoms. Freud was really just noting that people will deny their feelings about things, and that the dissociated feelings will tend to get expressed in other ways, often without any accompanying affect. Here, it is not the emotion which is discharged, but its derivative substitute, and this conforms more fully to the way psychoanalysis is actually practiced than to the usual metapsychological formulations. It implies that affect is central to psychic process, rather than merely one of its "manifestations."

The idea that the distinction between 'thinking' and 'feeling' is overdrawn in literate Western culture has become something of an academic cliché, and psychoanalysis and social science have played a large part in making it so. There is conflicting biological evidence on this point, at least at the level at which biological ideas have come to serve as popular mythologies. On the one hand, there is the widespread belief that children are essentially emotional beings with defective intellects which will gradually mature and take control. On the other hand, in academic psychology, there has until recently been an exclusive focus on infant cognition which, though assumed to be negligible, is still considered more worthy of investigation than the flux of infant states of mind, affective or otherwise. The capacity to experience emotions, and emotional developments

such as attachment and object constancy, are generally held to be dependent on cognitive development, and this view has been driven home in various ways by psychoanalytic ego psychology, behaviourist learning theory, and Piagetian timetabling. The confusion about the relation of emotion to thought is further compounded if we take into consideration the recent popularization of the split brain hypothesis: the left hemisphere of the brain is supposed to be intellectual, the right emotional. There is also the longstanding idea that the cerebral cortex, being a late phylogenetic development, suppresses the mammalian brain, which in turn overrides the reptilian brain, and so on: as if the human mental function were a pecking order, leading downward from the pure ability to calculate, through animal magnetism, to primeval selfishness. These brain metaphors are counterbalanced by other brain metaphors, for example the image of the brain as an evolving ecological totality, perfectly adapted to the age-specific needs of the human being, an integrated, smoothly functioning and purposeful organ designed with matchless foresight by the dictates, or friendly suggestions, of a benign nature (Restak 1986).

According to Bion (1962b), thoughts actually precede thinking (111). In order to grasp this apparently illogical assertion, we must take our cue from Freud, who, in the The Interpretation of Dreams, employed the term unconscious thought, or 'latent dream thought,' a phrase which he did not mean to be taken as necessarily synonymous with thinking

as an activity. A thought for Bion is like an event: it might occur without a thinking and perceiving observer. An infant might have a thought without recognizing it-- without ever thinking about it.

For Bion, thinking may be compared to a container. Whereas a thought becomes a kind of content when subsumed in the process of thinking, thinking itself, i.e., the thought of thinking, apparently has no content. It is an abstraction. In this respect, thinking is akin to the psychoanalytic concept of 'defence' (e.g., repression): something like a psychic manoeuvre is envisaged, but beyond the description of the form or process of the manoeuvre itself (the activity of thinking or defence), there is nothing specific defined. Thinking and defence are pure relations. They are capacities or abilities or functions, like Piaget's assimilation and accomodation, the philosopher's 'reference,' or the linguist's 'signification.' If thoughts are like terms or things, the substantives of mentation, thinking consists of their relational links or dynamic vicissitudes: the forms (or containers) without which there would be no contents-- a somewhat Platonic formulation.

Whether or not Bion was right to think of thoughts coming before thinking is moot and perhaps unimportant. A sophisticated behaviourist like Gregory Bateson would compare Bion's conception of 'thoughts' (as opposed to 'thinking') to trees falling in an uninhabited forest: an

unobserved thought is no thought at all, because it makes no difference. A so-called thought would have to be, in Bateson's phrase, a "difference that makes a difference" -- or in other words, already a thinking process. An event is by definition a change, and so there can be no thought-event which is not also a kind of thinking.

The first thought might be a "vitality affect" (Stern 1985, 53-56),² such as 'dizziness' or 'floating.' But global somatic sensations do not divide naturally between the opposed categories of thinking/thought, container/contained. They are neither thinking nor thought, or else they are both. If they are both, then we must agree that thoughts, at some basic level, are inseparable from thinking. The sensation of 'being crushed,' for example, is quite specific, a sort of 'content' (or what Bion called the "contained"); but it is also container-like-- a relation, a process. Vitality affects are after all shapes of the thinking process, 'falling' or 'accelerating' or 'cooling' can be ways of thinking thoughts: they are bodily metaphors, psychosomatic forms with their own simple, but elaboratable content. How would one experience 'expanding' without, in some sense, thinking it? If thoughts are rooted in ('dependent upon') the capacity for localized experience of the organismic environment, however primitive, then no being can either think or have thoughts independently of sensations related to gravity, proximity, intensity, texture, rest, motion, loudness, and so on. But if there are

perceptual prerequisites for thinking, it is very hard to make the distinction between having them and having the thoughts themselves-- or thinking. Psychic activity is presumably embedded in the biological equipment that makes it possible, and it is not clear how one can have the biological equipment for having thoughts without actually thinking, if only in some simple-minded and untested way. This is no doubt why Piaget refused to commit himself to the proposition that the tropisms of the sunflower are outside the domain of psychology (Bringuier, 3).

If we accept Stern's idea of vitality affects, it seems to follow that the simplest experience of self-- indeed the root of the concept of oneself as a person-- arises from the fusion (or identity)-- not of the self and the object -- but of the process and the content of experience: the natural unity, if you will, of the bodily 'vehicle' and the bodily 'referent.' The sense of interpenetration with the object, of being inside the other or of having the other inside oneself, would be a normal extension-- a symbolic elaboration-- of this radical connection between the self and the body's experience of itself experiencing itself and the object together. Something like this idea was expressed by Heinz Werner and Seymour Wapner (1965, 237-8) when they stated "that there can be no perception of objects 'out there' without a bodily framework, and, conversely... there can be no perception of the body-as-object without an environmental frame of reference.... The consequence... is

that the variability or stability of the biological unit, 'body-environment,' reflects itself in body perception as well as in object perception."

The arguable point is always, of course, whether and when sensation-thoughts such as 'falling,' 'expanding,' 'turning,' make enough of a difference to count as thinking. After all, perhaps thinking is just a supraordinate system, or perhaps a mere epiphenomenon-- something added on by virtue of the physiological maturation of the human brain, something entirely specific to the size and electrochemistry of the cerebral cortex, which certainly continue to change after birth. Even when a differential sensation is partly observable, as in the case of a discontented baby, it does not follow that this difference makes a thinking difference. The "infant sorrow" of which William Blake so eloquently wrote in the Songs of Experience may be purely automatic-- an "innate reflex" which is not actually experienced, registered, or processed. Although (as philosophers like both to affirm and deny) 'mind' is perhaps distinct from 'brain,' mind may nevertheless require myelination of the brain and months of subsequent 'learning' in order to come into being. On the other hand, there is evidence that the physico-chemical maturation of the brain itself also depends upon the (emotional) stimulus aspects of infant care, and not just the stimulus-reduction effects of nourishment and sheltering necessary for physical survival.³

Scott (1948) discussed the constituents of the body

image or "body scheme" as they may exist before and at birth. He defines the "body scheme" as "that conscious or unconscious integrate of sensations, perceptions, conceptions, affects, memories and images of the body from its surface to its depths and from its surface to the limits of space and time.... Part of the [body scheme] is a continually changing world scheme..." (142-3). Citing the embryological evidence of the day, he stated that "the infant at birth... has experienced gravitational orientation, righting movements, respiratory movements, and swallowing" (143). He discussed knowledge of foetal posture, movement, and neurology, and quoted Gesell to the effect that "no sharp line can be drawn between attitude and action" (144). Implicit in the notions of 'attitude' and 'action' is the notion of thinking as a function of the body. Gesell argued that "thought processes depend upon antecedent postural responses and are indeed rarefied revivals of these responses;" and he expressed the opinion that "in the mid-stage of foetal infancy (foetal age, 32 weeks), the thalamic region is apparently sufficiently advanced to support a simple, undiscriminating type of awareness" (Scott, 145). Michael Balint (1968, 66f.) suggested that the most fundamental type of human psychic experience could be described as a "harmonious interpenetrating mix-up," and he related this idea to the indeterminate boundaries of "foetus, amniotic fluid, and placenta," and to the tacit awareness of breathing, in which

the body envelops and is enveloped by its environment.

According to Scott (144-5):

Every infant develops a type of breathing which is distinctive of his individuality. Far from being a simple automatic function, breathing is in many respects the most complex of all action patterns. It not only sustains life; it sustains and regulates the activity of the central nervous system, and thereby becomes accessory to all other actions. By reason of its very complexity and its extremely ancient evolutionary history, its mechanisms pervade the organization and the total integration of all orders of behaviour.

The implications of this history for speech, which is the most elaborate meaningful type of breathing, are manifold.... Regression to the early object relationships, namely, to the invisible but palpable breath-- both inside and outside the mouth, nose, chest, etc., may be seen in schizophrenia when respiratory movements are overlibidinized. In some patients orgasmic experiences may be attributed to breathing.

It is possible to imagine birth as a kind of thinking-- not in order to prove a point about birth or thinking, but to envision some of the avenues not yet traversed by human understanding. Nobody would deny that humans are preoccupied at every level with the idea of birth, and it is entirely natural, in the sense of common, for us to think about "having thoughts" in terms of the various aspects of birth that we know about, such as conception, gestation, parturition, and "inspiration." A foetus may be able not only to react to, but to experience changes in the mother's body. A foetus in, say, the third trimester, may be intermittently "aware" of feelings which we might describe

as constriction, relaxation, increase and decrease of volume (spatial and auditory), and other changes of pace. These would be vague, of course, and understandably so. Then there is the whole matter of leaving the womb. This certainly excites the adult imagination, but we do not know whether it stimulates a foetus in any significant way. The simplest words we have for describing a live human undergoing birth are loaded with potential for thinking: pain, pressure, striving, pumping, gasping. Delivery makes us think of rhythms, and rhythms have speeds and intensities, which are essential to the structure of the thinking process. Even Kant, in the most rational of his works, talked about the mentally constitutive role of intensity, a theme which Nietzsche developed.⁴ For example, changes are experienced as gradual or sudden. Do babies being born sense this? We know that they move from a relatively confined space into an open space. Are they aware of a transition in the constraints on motility? And if so, does it matter to them in the least? What about the sensation of air on the skin? We know that very small infants experience extreme discomfort, and react to it very forcefully, but does this involve anything remotely like awareness or thinking? It has been demonstrated that the newborn baby will look in the direction of a noise right after delivery (Wertheimer 1961). We surmise from slowed down films that the bodies of infants in the delivery room jig and jog in response to the interactive rhythms of an

adult conversation.⁵ Perhaps the first human breaths (inspirations) resemble catastrophic swellings, followed by explosions, or joyous inhalations of all that is pleasurable. If sucking in air is a great pleasure for the neonate, the first inhalations might be like regaining something felt to be nearly lost, or they might be experienced as qualitatively unfamiliar-- revelations. Perhaps the pleasure in breathing is nonspecific, a kind of funktionslust, or simple pleasure in functioning. Nobody knows.

An unthinking thought, according to Bion, is like an anticipation without content, desire without an image of the object, an apprehension of organization, an expectation of change. Such an ur-thought is linked to affect and an innate or very early onset of capacity for global experiences of body states and gross bodily relations with the environment. Why distinguish it from thinking? Bion's aim was to avoid the view that a "thought [is] a product of thinking," a view which implies a somewhat rationalist equation of mind and consciousness. In its place, he offers an analogue of Freud's instinctual model: "thinking is a development forced on the psyche by the pressure of thoughts and not the other way round" (1962b, 111). Thinking evolves "under pressure." Thoughts are urges, primary process forces, which eventuate in thinking-- or secondary process and repression. The point of asserting this sequence is presumably to keep the psyche out of the Emyrean, to

maintain its links to the body, even if the nature of the psychosomatic bond cannot, in the present state of our knowledge, be explicated much further than the empiricists or the behaviourists have already attempted, without much success.

Freud's contribution to the scientific model of thinking was, in essence, to explore the whole dimension of proprioception and its elaboration. This is indeed one of the central contributions of psychoanalysis as an ongoing discipline. Although Freud was in many respects influenced by the inductivist and associationist psychology of the tradition that extends from Locke to Mill, he did not reduce the bodily "imagination," or psyche, to the contiguity logic of the external senses and their data. In fact, for Freud (who was only making the best scientific assumption of his day, no different from that of William James, Watson, or Piaget), there are no external senses operative at birth. His innovation was to see the origins of the psyche in its experience of itself, thus rooting all perception in a circuit relaying exteroceptive intake through the enteroceptive activity. For Freud, mind is primordially "narcissistic," a self enclosed entity, emergent from global experiences of the self, or at least, of what will come to be the own body in contradistinction to the rest of the world. As Freud (1923, 26) noted, "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego," not an observing ego, or a reasoning ego.

Bion's view of thinking is derived from this "primary narcissism" model of the ontogenesis of the psyche. The original form of a thought is, for Bion, a "pre-conception," an "inborn disposition corresponding to an expectation." Bion's example of this proto-mentation is, like Freud's, the "empty thought" of the mother's breast (a genetically endowed, non-specific expectation which isn't necessarily frustrated by technological substitutions such as the bottle). There is not much evidence for this "preconception," except for the fact that most babies seem to be pre-adapted to the whole breast-feeding procedure, rooting, sucking, and all. At any rate, for Bion, this pre-conception, which Freud would have called a drive, is an atomic proto-thought, which will become a real thought (thinking-- or thought process) when the "realization" (or simple object) of the pre-conception (the encountered breast) is perceived as absent. But for Bion, even this is still not thinking. It is only the growing pressure of a potential unit of thinking. "Thinking" would involve the gradual development of a given unit of thought, rather than the production of such units by an already established mechanism which does the thinking. In this sense, thinking, or in other words, the deductive capacity, is arrived at by inductive means: it accumulates, provided the right kind of experience is available from the environment. In fact, Bion goes so far as to say that it is really the mother who thinks the baby's first thoughts. As we saw in Chapter One,

the primary caretaker receives the baby's thoughts (drives, urges, panics), "metabolizes" them (a caretaking activity which Bion calls "reverie"), and "feeds" them back to the infant in a form which has been processed by a more developed thinking capacity. What the baby gets back is the outcome of an environmental function which quickly becomes the scaffolding, and eventually the internal structure, of its own "thinking" process.

Pleasure versus reality

The essential metapsychological problem for Freud was this: what is the basic nuclear concept of the psyche? From the Project For a Scientific Psychology through the various dualisms, culminating in Eros and Thanatos, Freud was concerned with deriving the simplest possible match-up between the organism and the environment that would yield the human psyche.⁶ The intellectual history of Freud's metapsychological research is immensely difficult, but it has an accessible, and in some ways quite ordinary starting point: the basic unit of psychic functioning is instinctual gratification, or in other words, the experience (or more properly, the 'memory trace') of pleasure/ satisfaction of the drive. The organism governed by the "pleasure principle" requires the "reality principle," of course, in order to survive; but (as we shall see later on) the latter is often treated as a derivative function, extrinsic to the organism in the most fundamental respects. What was

essential to the understanding of the psyche was the idea of a "primary process" governed by the pleasure principle. In spite of all his later modifications of these principles (and in spite of his refusal to ignore the complexity of psychic phenomena), Freud never deviated from his original metapsychological path, which was to describe how the psyche could emerge through the interaction between its own essential element and everything that was external to it, including other psyches. This is why Hegelian readings of Freud's metapsychology always have a certain *prima facie* plausibility.⁷

Once one has begun to grasp the structural consistency of Freud's theoretical work, it is easy to overlook the fact that in many ways his thought did undergo a profound reversal of valences (Laplanche 1970, 85). Indeed, the hypothesis of the death instinct virtually turned psychoanalysis inside out. The core problematic of sexuality, which had for so long been epitomized in the concept of libido, was eventually displaced by what appeared to be the most inner principle of all-- not the pleasure principle in its original sense, but Thanatos. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Eros appears as a vicissitude, a complication, a prolongation of the fundamental trajectory of the organism, which Freud defines as the drive to return to an original, "inorganic" state or, in other words, as the extinction of the individual organism itself. Thenceforth, it becomes impossible not to perceive an analogy between

Freud's "Principle of Constancy," which had governed the pleasure principle since 1895, and the death instinct itself. The drama of this metapsychological peripety has not been lost on those who ponder the fate of European thought; for what Freud had effectively done was to suggest for the first time that the classical figure of death-- the allegorical emblem of the extrinsic, the 'alien' and the 'Other'-- was actually the substance not only of the body, but of the Spirit as well, as we saw at the end of the last chapter. Yet, in adopting this new orientation, Freud had not drifted so far from his beginnings as is sometimes supposed, and we shall confirm this when we examine the subordinate position that pleasure has always occupied in the metapsychology of the instinctual drives.

What is even less widely recognized about the meaning of Freud's later period, of which the death instinct is only the most cogent expression, is that it is a coherent response-- not only to war and cancer and old age-- but to a theoretical imbalance. In brief, the very concept of the pleasure principle, when analysed, implicitly contains the concepts of the defences, the stimulus barrier, and the organism's capacity to take in and throw out what it experiences (in a way which has enduring psychological and ontogenetic significance): in other words, the pleasure principle and the primary process presuppose some capacity to 'think,' although this is often denied. As we have already glimpsed in the foregoing discussion of the

psychogenetic significance of the "negative," the idea of an organism seeking and preferring pleasure is psychologically meaningless without the assumption of an inbuilt tendency to sketch boundaries and to adumbrate the difference between the "self" and the "other." If the pleasure principle is to be more than a mere tropism, a prescientific concept of attraction and repulsion which sheds little light on the psychodynamics which Freud actually studied, then it must (as Heinz Hartmann [1939] was to point out) be only an aspect of an integrated psychological Anlage, a more ramified human endowment, and not the original atom of the psyche, as Freud tried to make it in Chapter 7 of The Interpretation of Dreams.

The Hungry Baby

Freud's argument in Chapter 7 of The Interpretation of Dreams is concerned mainly with the functioning of what Freud calls "the psychical apparatus," and more specifically, the "primitive" psychical apparatus at an early stage of its development. But there is a crucial passage where the argument crystallizes in the vivid image of a "hungry baby." The phrase "hungry baby" does not reappear in Freud's writings, but it has come to serve as an epithet for the basic model of psychoanalytic metapsychology. It was anticipated in Freud's Project (1895, 296-7, 318-9, 328-9), and was elaborated subsequently in a variety of contexts, notably Freud's (1911)

"Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (219). David Rappaport (1951) has suggested that the fundamental observation underlying the "conceptual model of psychoanalysis" takes the following schematic form: "restlessness (in infant)-- appearance of breast and sucking-- subsidence of restlessness" (225).

"A hungry baby screams or kicks helplessly." This seemingly innocuous phrase (Freud 1900, 565) is the center of gravity in Freud's whole discussion of the functioning of the psychic apparatus. It illustrates the simplest nuclear formation of a psychological mechanism, namely, that the "first structure" of the psyche "follow[s] the plan of a reflex apparatus, so that any sensory excitation impinging on it [is] promptly discharged along a motor path" (565). Freud's use of the reflex arc model was an heuristic one, the deployment of a guiding hypothesis.⁸ In the Interpretation of Dreams, he even referred to it as a "fiction"-- "the fiction of a primitive psychical apparatus whose activities are regulated by an effort to avoid an accumulation of excitation and to maintain itself so far as possible without excitation" (598). But he also afforded this concept the status of a necessary biological postulate -- the "Constancy Principle"-- and defined the nervous system in terms of it: i.e., as "an apparatus which has the function of getting rid of the stimuli that reach it, or of reducing them to the lowest possible level; or which, if it were feasible, would maintain itself in an altogether

unstimulated condition" (1915a, 120).

According to Freud, then, the efforts of the psychic apparatus are initially "directed towards keeping itself so far as possible free from stimuli" (1900, 565). This means that any stimulus is a potential impingement on the regulatory balance of the apparatus. Of course, since the apparatus is organized along the lines of a simple reflex arc, it will tend to be somewhat closed in on itself, and thus (perhaps blissfully) unaware of all but the most traumatic assaults on its sensibilities. But the organism is also confronted with internal sources of stimulation which cannot be so easily avoided. The most irrepressible of these is hunger. The difference between a bodily discomfort such as hunger and an external source of irritation such as an excessively bright light is twofold: the latter is usually temporary, and it can be shut out (by turning away, closing the eyes, going to sleep), thus preserving the pleasurable state of reduced tension in the system. In contrast, the force of the vital needs (das Not des Lebens) does not diminish spontaneously, and "no actions of flight avail against them" (1915a, 119).

There is a third basis for distinguishing between the external stimulus and the internal instinctual drive: namely that the unpleasant effect of the drive can be diminished only through what Freud calls "satisfaction." If a hungry baby is not fed, the pressure of the stimulus (hunger) on the apparatus will increase, and this increase of

innervation is what Freud defines as "unpleasure."

Conversely, a decrease in the force of the stimulus-- the satisfaction of the drive-- constitutes "pleasure." This is how Freud derived the "pleasure principle" (originally called the "unpleasure principle"). In combination with the Constancy Principle, it forms the groundplan of the psychic apparatus.

Freud's next move was a brilliant one. In effect, he asked: what happens in the baby when the drive has yet to be gratified? The cry of the hungry baby can be interpreted as a primitive form of communication; the drive acts as a releasing mechanism which sets off a discharge of motor activity, in this case, the infant's expression of hungry anguish, to which the caretaker will normally respond. But what goes on inside the baby when the mother doesn't come? Freud's answer to this question presupposes that the infant has already had an 'experience of satisfaction.' Previous quenchings of the drive-- when the mother did come-- will have included a perceptual element. The memory traces of these experiences of satisfaction will inevitably become associated with the stimulus of the drive itself. In consequence, the drive, upon resurgence, will be in a position to trigger a new element-- the mnemonic image of satisfaction-- and thus to "re-evoke the perception itself, that is to say, to re-establish the situation of the original satisfaction." In short, the arousal of a vital need gives rise to the wish for its fulfillment, and this in

turn provokes "regression" to the corresponding memory trace, which is thereby "cathected," or charged with psychic intensity. The memory trace acquires a "perceptual identity" with the actual experience of satisfaction as sensed in the past. No breast or bottle actually appear; but the baby has an experience of the satisfaction of the drive. This is what Freud meant by 'psychic activity.' The infant's wish-fulfillment, its fantasmatic reproduction of the memory of gratification, is the first component of a subjective, internal world, the psychic dimension in which thinking "takes place."⁹

"Nothing," says Freud (1900), "prevents us from assuming that there was a primitive state of the psychical apparatus ... in which wishing ended in hallucinating" (566). But such a blissfull state cannot last indefinitely. The memory trace, no matter how pleasant, is no match for the drive; it will sooner or later be overwhelmed by the pressure of the internal stimulus. And so this primary type of thought process-- the pressure (like Bion's pre-conception) giving rise both to regression to the trace (the hallucination), and to its eventual failure-- must of necessity evolve into a "secondary process," the mental activity associated with the ego, and with the practical achievement of the drive aim. When the cathected mnemonic image does not succeed in reducing the unpleasure of the organism, the infant will return to crying, but this time with psychic purpose. The motor discharge will be aimed at

a specific object; moreover, this object will be distinguished in some minimal sense from the mental image of the object, since the cathexis of the latter has been abandoned in favour of "specific action," and thus "reality testing" will have begun. The baby cries again, and eventually the mother comes. As Freud explains, "Thought is after all nothing but a substitute for a hallucinatory wish" (1900, 567).¹⁰

With this observation, Freud carries us into the realm of the "principles of mental functioning," which he divided into two: the pleasure principle and the reality principle:

A new function was now allotted to motor discharge, which, under the dominance of the pleasure principle, had served as a means of unburdening the mental apparatus of accretions of stimuli, and which had carried out this task by sending innervations into the interior of the body (leading to expressive movements and the play of features and to manifestations of affect). Motor discharge was now employed in the appropriate alteration of reality; it was converted into action (1911, 221).

As Freud emphasized whenever his attention was focused on the relation between the two principles, the rise of the second, the reality principle, should not be taken to imply that the first, the pleasure principle, has been destroyed, or even deposed. The pleasure principle has devolved into the reality principle (as in Clausewitz's famous dictum) so that the second is really the continuation of the first by other means. In Freud's own lucid account, the difference out of which the reality principle evolves is essentially a

practical one-- a matter of expediency. This pragmatic distinction can be expressed in terms of what Freud described, in another context, as "a grade in the ego"-- not between ego and superego, as he originally (1921) intended this phrase, but a more fundamental gradation of the body ego into a "pleasure ego" and a "reality ego."

Just as the pleasure-ego can do nothing but wish, work for a yield of pleasure, and avoid unpleasure, so the reality-ego need do nothing but strive for what is useful and guard itself against damage. Actually the substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle implies no deposing of the pleasure principle, but only a safeguarding of it (1911, 223).

The pleasure principle remains intact-- on this point, Freud was consistent: it always retained its primacy over the reality principle in his thought.¹¹ This view that the pleasure principle necessarily takes ultimate precedence over the reality principle derives from the fact that the pleasure principle continues to supply the motive, while the reality principle merely introduces a change of means. The reality principle can legislate the abandonment of specific objects -- for example, it can indicate that the hallucinated gratification of the drive is ineffectual, and should be relinquished if satisfaction is to be achieved; but it must point the way to adequate substitutes, and these must conform to an ultimate aim: the reduction of unpleasurable drive tension (the constancy principle).

To the extent that the concept of the reality principle represents in Freud's thought primarily the pragmatic

adjustment of the dictates of the pleasure principle, it really signifies the adaptation of the pleasure principle to the "external world." On this interpretation, activities based on the pleasure principle are simply evolving in the light of experience. As Hartmann (1939) pointed out, it is unnecessary to characterize this type of development as a true change of function, i.e., as a reorientation from pleasure to reality. Some version of "reality" is always in play, and unless we start from the assumption that the pleasure principle originally functions in complete isolation from anything we might conceivably deem to be real, including the somatic demand of the drive itself, we are obliged to reinterpret much of the behavioural domain conventionally ascribed to the emergence of a new psychic regime-- the reality principle-- as nothing more than a pragmatic extension-- an increasingly practical implementation-- of the pleasure principle. Hartmann expresses this point very clearly:

Psychoanalysis has impressed upon us how much the pleasure principle disturbs adaptation, and this can easily lead us to underestimate its significance in the mastery of the external world....the mental apparatus must search the external world for pleasure possibilities as soon as its needs exceed a certain measure and can no longer be satisfied by fantasy. The turning to reality can also be a protection against anxieties aroused by fantasies and may serve to master anxiety. In these two cases the turning to the external world and the necessity to acknowledge it are still completely under the sway of the pleasure principle (41-2).

But Hartmann's formulation, as it stands, might just as well be turned around. Once it is acknowledged that it is on the basis of the pleasure principle itself that the infant gives up on the fantasy of satisfaction, and seeks the real breast, there no longer seems to be any strong reason to invoke two different principles to explain this development. Our conceptual analysis of the hungry baby model leads to the unexpected discovery that the two principles not only presuppose each other-- they are in significant respects interchangeable at this stage of psychological development. The essential function of both is the same, viz., to "cause the nervous system to undertake... activities by which the external world is so changed as to afford satisfaction to the internal source of stimulation" (Freud 1915a, 120). However, insofar as the ultimate aim of the drive is satisfaction in reality, we must assume the logical -- if not the temporal or ontogenetic -- priority of the reality principle. The pleasure principle, as Freud defines it, and as Hartmann later glosses it, is really conceived in the image of the reality principle and its pragmatic criteria: it is already the reality principle in undeveloped form-- its false start.¹²

Waiting for Gratification

There is no doubt that in Freud's account, the reality principle is inseparable from the pleasure principle. Not

only does Freud come very close to stating this explicitly; it is an inescapable inference. We have seen that the hungry baby's hallucinated gratification is inevitably a disappointment; it cannot satisfy. At best, regression to the mnemic image of satisfaction will serve to delay the impact of frustration. But the unpleasurable accumulation of excitation in the baby must be such that, given the Principle of Constancy, the baby will abandon its fantasized wish-fulfillment in favour of the real breast at the first opportunity, and (under favourable conditions) the baby undoubtedly does this with pleasure. Thus, the mechanism of the pleasure principle leads quite naturally to a realistic choice, and supplies every necessary motive for the baby to distinguish between its fantasies and reality.¹³

In fact, the metapsychological issue is not the conflict between pleasure and reality, as the names of Freud's two principles and two egos seem to imply; nor is it the distinction between the imaginary breast and the real one, which the infant easily makes in practice on the basis of the "pleasure principle," as Hartmann pointed out. Preference for the real breast (as opposed to the mental image of it) does not require a "concept" or "representation" of "reality" in the Kantian or Piagetian mentalistic sense. To the extent that the reality principle is explained by the evolution of the drive, the two principles are indistinguishable, and we might just as well say that the drive operates on the reality principle as on

the pleasure principle-- that is, it aims for satisfaction.

What makes Freud's account interesting for us now is that it actually sketches out a set of issues which extend beyond the hungry baby model. The problem raised implicitly by Freud concerns the relation between the drive and the object, which cannot be accounted for within the logic of the constancy principle. The psychologically significant distinction between the two principles of mental functioning is not the difference between fantasy and reality (which in its rudimentary forms can be explained well-enough in terms of conventional conditioning or learning theory), but the difference between demanding immediate gratification and being able to tolerate delays in satisfaction of the drive. As Freud (1911) says, "the substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle implies no deposing of the pleasure principle, but only a safeguarding of it. A momentary pleasure, uncertain in its results, is given up, but only in order to gain along the new path an assured pleasure at a later time" (223).

This point was also stressed by Hartmann: it implies that the real meaning of the reality principle is not reality testing as such, but the capacity to withstand the pressure of the drive, to sustain a measure of emotional equilibrium, until such time as satisfaction can really be achieved. But Freud did not explain how such a capacity could be derived in terms of his metapsychology. He simply assigned it as a feature of the reality principle. There is

no doubt that the ability to absorb drive pressure would distinguish the reality principle sharply from the pleasure principle. But does it really belong to the reality principle? It would appear that it cannot-- at least insofar as the reality principle represents only a modification of the pleasure principle. As Hartmann (1939) stated: "The ability to renounce an immediate pleasure-gain in order to secure a greater one in the future cannot be derived from the pleasure principle alone; not even memories of painful experiences suffice to explain it" (42).

What Freud did not directly address, in his explanation of the capacity for deferral of gratification, is the possibility that it implies an emotional attachment which is not entirely reducible to the motive of drive-reduction-- or the principle of constancy-- which governs the pleasure and reality principles alike. Hartmann also avoided this implication-- or rather, he met it only half way. Although he recognized the difficulty in Freud's account of the relationship between the two principles, he retained Freud's assumption that attachment to the object is essentially "anaclitic" -- that it "leans on," or derives from the need gratifying function of the object. This means that the infant's attachment to the object is based essentially on the calculation of practical advantage (and expediency): it results from the development of the pleasure principle into the reality principle, and cannot be one of the preconditions of the reality principle in this limited

sense. In consequence, Hartmann could not deal directly with the question of the baby's emotional relation to the object in the early history of the drive. Instead, he concentrated on the cognitive aspect of the problem: he posited that in addition to the pleasure principle, there must be two kinds of reality principle: the narrow pragmatic one, which derives from the pleasure principle in the manner Freud postulated, but which cannot explain the rise of the capacity for deferral of gratification; and a broader, cognitive reality principle, which "would historically precede and hierarchically outrank the pleasure principle." It would be the latter which forms the basis of anticipation and deferral, orients the baby toward realistic solutions, and "can even regulate the possibilities of pleasure gain" (44).

The problem that both Hartmann and Freud were skirting around is the fact that although the ability to put off demands for gratification will one day yield great practical benefits, it cannot at the outset be characterised as an essentially cognitive or pragmatic achievement -- it is an emotional development which in some ways goes beyond the question of "reality" in either the cognitive or the practical senses of that term. If the hungry baby learns to be just a little more patient, this is not likely to be because it discerns some obvious advantage, such as a more prompt feed. On the contrary, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, the evidence seems to suggest the opposite:

namely, that the relation between the mother and the child is not a matter of who wins the struggle over somatic demands, but rather a question of how they negotiate an overall psychosomatic and rhythmic fit (Tronick 1982). The infant's increasing capacity to tolerate delay is not based on practical considerations; in fact, if the mother ignores the baby's crying, on the theory that a quick response to distress would only be a reinforcement of the crying behaviour, the baby will actually tend to cry more, rather than less, as the first year of life unfolds (Bell & Ainsworth 1972). Moreover, it would be rather far-fetched (and a genuine example of the adultomorphic fallacy) to assume that the baby learns to wait quietly for mother's breast because it has calculated, on the basis of expediency, that a feed is more likely if it does not give in to the pressure of hunger right away.

Leaving aside constitutional factors and innate temperamental differences, we can say that the baby comes to scream less when it is hungry if it has a satisfying emotional relationship with the mother (Ainsworth and Bell 1977). To be able to wait is to trust the object's good intentions, and this implies that the baby is willing to grant its relation to the object a certain priority, even in fantasy, over the pressure of the drive to achieve satisfaction. It means that the 'aim' of the drive has become (or is already) more than pleasure through reduction of tension [i.e., the reactive avoidance of pain], but also

some other aspect of the object, some unconsumable or inchoate dimension of the 'other'-- an aesthetic dimension, if you will-- as an important additional source of pleasure which compensates for the destabilizing effect of hunger-drive pressure. If we accept this, then we must try to define pleasure not only in terms of reduction of stimulus, but also in terms of increase and anticipation of stimulus-- in other words, we must either abandon or relativize the Constancy Principle; and we must assume that even in the case of the very young baby, the term 'stimulus' may legitimately refer to processes psychologically much more complex than the experience of hunger and its gratification.

The fact is that putting off gratification has little to do with giving up hallucinations in favour of external reality. At the very minimum, we should expect that the "reality principle" in this other sense of Freud's -- the sense of being able to wait, to tolerate deferral of gratification-- depends precisely on the baby's faith in the object, its belief in the memories of satisfaction, and hence perhaps also on its capacity to fantasize. On this view, what Freud calls a regression to the mnemic trace, or "hallucination," is not necessarily a return to a more primitive mode of psychic functioning; it may represent the development of an internal world in which the baby is learning to entertain itself with "hallucinations" while it waits for the "reality" it wants to materialize. So thinking (symbolization) in this primitive sense would

appear to be something that develops actively in relation to the object, rather than only negatively as a secondary defence against the nonsatisfaction of the drive.

Pain

Freud's early metapsychological reasoning (1895-1900), when examined closely, offers only slim grounds for asserting the primacy of pleasure in the psyche, and affords little insight into the nature of libido, or what he later (1920) called Eros (Compton 1981). The overriding emphasis is on the regulation and diminution of pain. Even within the perspective of the structural model, Freud speaks, for example, of "the id, guided by the pleasure principle-- that is, by the perception of unpleasure..." (1923, 47). As we have seen, this view of the somatic forces at work within the psyche, whose representatives Freud deemed to be unconscious, was influenced to some extent by the convenient and illustrative logic of hunger. Hunger is by no means a simple experience, but (if we leave aside the cultural development of taste and the oral and anal constellations of psychosexual development) the psychological effects of hunger are in the main readily accessible to consciousness; and the method of satisfaction is a fairly straightforward matter of consumption. This cannot be said of the 'sexual instincts' at any time of life. As a rule, Freud's metapsychological formalization of the drive concept fails to do justice to the sense of significance and complexity

with which his otherwise less theoretically strict references to libido, sexuality, Eros and pleasure are laden. In the five existing meta-psychological papers, Freud rarely touches on the problem of psycho-sexual development, and makes no mention of the Oedipus Complex. The issue of sexual desire in specific was always held apart from consideration of the drives in general.

If the fate of sexuality in psychoanalytic theory has suffered from difficulties in conceptualizing the drive,¹⁴ this may have resulted in part from the convenient habit of lumping the many different kinds of pleasure together, and particularly the forms of satisfaction (cf. Schur, 152), at the metapsychological level, in order to make them conform to the Constancy Principle.¹⁵ It would be wrong to say that Freud reduced metapsychology to the model of hunger. But there would be some justice in arguing that all the central features of the drive theory can be traced to a sort of amalgam of two easily observable physiological phenomena. The first would be the satisfaction of hunger, as we have seen; the second would be the male sexual orgasm, which clearly illustrates the mechanism of pleasurable bodily discharge. In general, every drive is conceived as a somatic source of tension with a certain impetus to be discharged through achievement of an aim, satisfaction, which is gained by consumption of an object. At the most basic level of drive-economy, this model tends to cast the psyche in a passive role: the emphasis is on gaining

pleasure, rather than making it, and pleasure itself is understood primarily as a kind of relief. The possibilities of finding pleasure in the imaginative discovery of an object, or of creating pleasure through the construction of an object, or of elaborating pleasure through a form of interaction with an object (what Kant described in his Critique of Judgment as "purposiveness without a purpose" and "the free play of the understanding and the imagination") are not categorically excluded; but they have no clear metapsychological status, since they are treated by definition as secondary derivative modifications (e.g., through sublimation) of the tension pattern of the drives.

The object of the drive would be the pole around which the potential for an active pleasure principle (i.e., pleasure seeking as a primary motivational factor) is clustered. But the object for Freud was not in the main a dynamic concept. The activity of drive functioning comes chiefly from the drive's somatic source, its impetus (energy or force) and its aim (satisfaction); yet, when taken by themselves, in relation to a static object, these dimensions of the drive are only dynamic in a reactive sense, because they are defined predominantly in terms of the means-ends rationality of flight/pursuit, and motivated less by gains in pleasure than by discharge of unpleasure. The object-- and therefore the potential within the organism for pleasure as an end in itself, rather than as a by-product of the escape from pain-- had, for Freud, a metapsychologically

secondary status. Of the four constituents of the drive, he held the object to be "what is most variable about an instinct... [It] is not originally connected with [the instinct], but becomes assigned to it only in consequence of being peculiarly fitted to make satisfaction possible" (1915a, 122). (In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, innervation itself is defined as painful: in Freud's new account of "the conservative nature of the instincts" as "an urge inherent in all living matter to return to an earlier inorganic state," the precarious object pole of the 1915 definition completely disappears in favour of the overriding aim to extinguish all stimulation.)

Freud did, in fact, make a concession on these points. He noted that the object can become the focus of "a particularly close attachment of the instinct" which he described as a fixation. During psychosexual development, there are many potential objects of fixation, not least the parts of the own body. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests overwhelmingly that primary caretakers are the most important objects of such fixations, and Freud (having invented it) was well aware of this fact. In his metapsychological discussions of the drive, however, Freud ignored the possibility that the infant is capable not only of taking pleasure from the object, as in the satisfaction of hunger, but also of taking pleasure in the object, and then of elaborating, rather than just consuming, this pleasure, in interaction with the object, and in temporary

disregard of the Constancy Principle. (See Brazelton, et al. 1974; Stern 1977; Trevarthen 1979). In other words, Freud did not grasp in its full significance the "symbolic" dimension of the preverbal infant's psychological existence (and the extent to which healthy drive satisfaction itself probably depends upon symbolic satisfaction at a very early age indeed).

This was the problem that the object-relations theorists were struggling with: the origins of psychic activity in the relation to the object (though not necessarily in interaction with the external object). In the process of developing this new perspective, Klein, Fairbairn, and Winnicott transformed both of the physiological metaphors underlying Freud's metapsychology-- hunger (consumption) and orgasm (discharge): the helplessness and the excitement of the infant-- into symbolic relations with the object (rather than energetic relations to the aim) of the drive. Metapsychology became, especially in the works of Klein and Bion, a problematic of orality and anality, a reflection on 'object-hunger' and the 'evacuation' (into the object) of dystonic psychic states. But this restoration of the object by no means settled the question of pleasure which Freud had raised. Its consequence was not to place the experience of pleasure on a new and more secure metapsychological footing, but to reinforce its displacement in favour of the emphasis on pain already implicit in Freud. This is particularly clear in

the Kleinian school, where Fairbairn's dictum that the drive is object-seeking (rather than pleasure-seeking) is interpreted mainly in the light of primitive defences against psychic pain.

It is well-known that the evolution of Freud's thought (1914, 1917, 1923) foreshadows these developments. After 1914, the relation to the object began to acquire more significance in light of the structural model which was emerging. Of course, the theme of bliss dominated Freud's description of the neonate: the infant was like a protoplasm or an unhatched egg, "a system living according to the pleasure principle" (1911 220n.); psychic life was tinged by "oceanic feeling," and infantile sexuality was auto-erotic and polymorphous perverse. But these were all images of an isolate whose objects were nonexistent, inconstant, or "assigned." As soon as Freud considers the psychodynamic function of the object in infantile life, the picture changes. To be sure, Freud held that the mother is the "first love object;" but he also wrote that "hate, as a relation to objects, is older than love. It derives from the narcissistic ego's primordial repudiation of the external world with its outpouring of stimuli" (1915, 139). The hungry baby had become the angry baby.

Scott (1948, 152-3) argued that the concept of hallucinatory gratification implies both the denial of an object relation (that is, the relation of the "frustrated, immanent mouth" to the breast), but also the splitting of

the body scheme into psyche and soma. Commenting on Klein's ideas about the omnipotent denial of psychic reality (which includes the 'bad object' and "the whole situation of frustration and the bad feelings (pain) to which frustration gives rise"), he pointed out that the wish-fulfillment depends upon the separation and 'annihilation' of a part of experience. "The memory of a previous satisfaction may be conscious in the hallucination-- but if this is so, the hallucinated mouth is separated from the immanent but denied desiring mouth."

As we have already seen from analysis of the "hungry baby" and the two principles of psychic functioning, metapsychology assumes that the first psychic events, or differences which make a thinking difference, are experiences of unpleasure-- specifically, the build up of drive tension. In the last analysis, the basic motive force for Freud was unpleasure as a goad to action. The active search for pleasure would appear to be something that can not develop until the modification of the pleasure ego by the reality principle has begun. Nevertheless, it is important to note (especially in the light of Scott's reflection on the body scheme) that the hungry baby's hallucination can be interpreted as an early step in the psychic construction of a 'reality,' since hallucinatory gratification is, according to Freud, the first mental attempt to cope effectively with unpleasure. It is not yet action, in the observable sense, but it is a complex

attitude, a kind of incipient reflection about the organization of experience-- and thus an inevitable psychic detour on the eventual path to action.

Let us now return to Bion's postulate that thoughts precede thinking. The meaning of this proposition has begun to take on a new colouring: what Bion seems to have meant is not so much that thought precedes thinking as that pain precedes pleasure-- or at least that the experience of pain precedes the thought of pleasure (the hallucination of gratification), which in turn precedes the capacity for pleasurable thinking.

Bion's way of putting things has often led to puzzlement. Otto Kernberg (1980), among others, has severely criticized his work, describing it as a "highly idiosyncratic theory of earliest development" (41). This may be so, but in metapsychological terms, Bion's views were not so much a departure from Freud's as an elaboration of them. Bion's account of development differs from Freud's mainly in the fact that, following Klein, it grasps the quality of unpleasurable experience in more "phenomenological" detail (hence the bizarre quality of Bion's clinical descriptions), and brings the motivating attributes of pain more closely into line with the problem of the object of the drive, by extending the idea, already implicit in Freud, that what draws the infant toward the object is precisely the object's capacity to transmute pain and confusion into pleasure and organization. Through what

Bion calls "reverie" (see above), the object, or caretaker, provides the infant with an organized response to its chaotic encounter with the pressure of need which includes the pleasurable process of thinking through the primitive elements of experience, and ordering them into a psychosomatic gestalt in which the infant can establish an affective foothold.

Bion's most immediate source of inspiration for these ideas was Klein, who stated her views in a somewhat different language. For Klein, it was vitally important in development that the good "libidinal" experience of the object outweigh the bad aggressive experience of the object in the emerging constellation of the psyche. She talked about how the baby would deflect the annihilating experience of the "death instinct" outward into the object. This formulation directly parallels Freud's ultimate (1920, 1930) account of the dynamic sources of human aggression and fear of persecution.

Klein wrote of the need to "internalize the good object" as an antidote to the "death instinct," and Bion wrote of the mother's ability to contain and metabolize the infant's catastrophic states. It is not so difficult to reconcile these points of view with Freud's account of the hungry baby's regression, in which it turns out that "thought is after all nothing but a substitute for a hallucinatory wish." All three of them were theorizing about origins of mind in terms of psychosomatic responses to

pain, and this reflects Freud's enduring view that the self-contained or egg-like quality of the nascent psyche can only be breached by need-- and the pain to which it gives rise-- which seduce the infant into an affective submission to the pleasure-providing object. Thus, although the broad and often unacknowledged influence of Klein has been to increase our appreciation of the (internal) object in our understanding of psychodynamics, object relations theory still works within the parameters of the Constancy Principle, disguised in the form of the infant's flight to the object (internal or external) in pursuit of more tolerable and stable states of the self. (The essential difference between Freud and Klein (and the object relations theorists) is that Freud conceived the modification of the pleasure principle into the reality principle as a practical achievement on behalf of the otherwise hapless drive, whereas Klein tended to view it as a moral victory for the abused object.)

So we are back to Bion, who began with pain, and with the pressure of a 'thought'-- the effect of absence (in this case, of the breast), as the potential for thinking. As we saw, he insisted on "the importance of doubting that a thinker is necessary because thoughts exist" (1967, 165). He argued (in a style reminiscent of Lacan's later quasi-mathematical speculations) that the first number before 'two' (mother and child) is not one ('me'), but infinity ('nothing but me'). Thoughts exist in the undifferentiated

flux of primary narcissism, but they are infinite thoughts, there is no thinker to contain them, to impose the parameters and the distinctions which make thinking-- in contradistinction to merely "having" thoughts-- possible. This paradox cannot be resolved by appealing to the concept of the unconscious (which no longer seems so paradoxical as it did in Freud's day). An unconscious thought requires a conscious thinker who is unaware of it. The psyche of Bion's baby is suspended in an entirely different order of experience. It is neither conscious nor unconscious. It is incapable of "repressing" a thought, because it does not "identify" a thought sufficiently to block it out. The thought without a thinker is a kind of "pure id" phenomenon, or in other words, the "hungry baby" that we have so far been considering.

For Freud, the hungry baby's first thought (which, as Bion points out, is not the result of thinking) is a hallucination, the most primitive and untutored way of recovering a memory. Given this starting point, it seems reasonable to surmise that hallucinatory reexperiencing eventually develops into fantasy, where the connection of psychic activity to specific and privileged memories is gradually loosened, so that a larger fund of experience can be elaborated and drawn upon. This is one way of conceiving the origins of the human capacity for symbolization. Bion's contribution to this model was to explore the flip side of the process. He retained Freud's global contrast between a

pleasure ego and a bad external reality-- the basic constellation of narcissistic organization; but he added to the infant's hallucination a psychic underpinning which Freud had not spelled out. This was Klein's concept of projective identification.

Following Klein and Scott, we see that the hungry baby's painful experience must first be expelled before pleasure can be omnipotently reconstituted inside (i.e., Freud's pleasure ego). Only then can the hungry baby relive the memory of satisfaction. This is a detail which Freud left out of his original metapsychological description of the hungry baby, and it is safe to assume that he left it out because in the 1890's he was not really thinking of the drive in its relation to the object. It was only after he had fully recognized the importance of projection, in the Schreber case, and the irreducibility of aggression, in his formulation of the problem of what lies "beyond" the pleasure principle, that he implicitly filled this gap in his account of infantile psychodynamics.

So, with the amendment which Klein had teased out of Freud's later work-- projective identification-- Bion arrives back at the point where Freud more or less began in his first published explanation of the primary process in Chapter Seven of The Interpretation of Dreams; and, as in that account, the baby's hallucination fails. But this is experienced by the baby, on Klein's authority, as the revenge of the bad object: the earliest manifestation of the

"talion law." The object has become hateful as a result of projective identification: it is the frustrating, absent breast, the locus of all the baby's pain, which is now conveniently, but dangerously, 'out there.' When what Freud called the pleasure ego proves incapable of keeping what Klein called the good breast inside (when the hallucination fails to satisfy the drive), what all the writers call pain-- the experience that was originally evacuated-- is now felt inside again-- and this is the return of the bad object, invading and devouring the infant with its own hunger. Thus, the analysis of the basic concepts of classical metapsychology-- the pleasure principle, the drive, the pleasure ego, the reality principle, and the constancy principle (which demands the reduction of unpleasurable tension through discharge)-- leads inexorably back to Freud's concept of the death instinct, and to Melanie Klein's interpretation of it in her theory of the "paranoid-schizoid position," which was Bion's starting point, and remains the most compelling version of pain-psychology available in modern civilization.

Summary and Concluding Comment

The foregoing considerations suggest that it would be advisable to mate the pleasure and the reality principles, in the economic and regulatory senses of those terms, and to call them, collectively, the pain principle. The pain principle would cover not only withdrawal from stimuli, but

any stimulus-seeking activity originating in an unpleasurable current, including sublimation in the classical sense (see also Levin 1987a, 32-3).

What Hartmann described as the "second" reality principle (not derived from the original [un]pleasure principle), I shall call simply the sensory-cognitive ego, which (as Hartmann intimated, and much subsequent infant research has confirmed) is present from birth as a human biopsychological Anlage.

The capacity to defer drive satisfaction (when not for reasons of expediency which can be explained as adaptation of the pain principle, i.e., when linked instead to the whole question of emotional attachment, which we shall begin to explore in the next chapter but one) should probably be counted among the attributes belonging to the object principle (using the term 'object' in the psychoanalytic rather than the Piagetian sense). It should be noted that the affective system is intimately related to the object principle. (Klein was the first really to make a case for this.) However, emotional development is probably not contingent on object relations alone, but also on the way in which the latter intersect with the pain principle and the rudimentary ego, which may be influenced by internal or constitutional as well as environmental factors. In general, affect is not reducible to the functioning of any one of the poles which constitute Freud's (1915a) definition of the drive. Like perception (both enteroceptive and

exteroceptive), cognition, motor development, language development, and the drives themselves, it has a quasi-autonomous psychobiological base.¹⁶

It is important to be able to see development in psychodynamic terms, but when the psychodynamic, adaptive, and genetic points of view are brought together, their combined explanatory scope can be exaggerated. Hartmann himself pointed out that not all psychological functions can be "derived" from conflict over drives and needs. As argued in Chapter One, psychic activity needs to be understood as much in terms of the relationships between the various mental functions as in terms of their apparent (phylo)genetic origins and their alleged sequence of development.

The grouping of metapsychological issues proposed here (pain principle, ego, object principle) has several advantages: briefly, it dispenses with the metaphysical implications of atomism and essentialism-- Freud's tendency to derive all of psychic life from the vicissitudes of one phylogenetically primary, functional principle-- and replaces it with a more realistic, multi-genetic model of the psychic apparatus (the psyche conceived as an ongoing interaction and growth of psychological capacities); and it diminishes the confusing effect of introducing references to reality into metapsychological discourse, where 'reality' may mean any number of degrees and kinds of relation to the environment (and the self). The present formulation also

conforms, in some important respects, to Schur's recommendation that we distinguish the pleasure principle from the unpleasure principle (127-152).¹⁷ Finally, it leaves room for consideration of a primary autonomous (but not necessarily conflict-free) aesthetic orientation to the world, to go along with the fundamentally practical point of view formulated by Freud in terms of the pain principle, and the essentially moral one developed by Klein in terms of the object principle. As we have seen, the aesthetic dimension of psychic life has been discussed in various ways by Winnicott (1971), Milner (1987), and Ehrenzweig (1967), among others; and as we shall see, it has emerged also in the experimental tradition of infant psychology. As Werner and Kaplan (1963) seemed to be suggesting in their various discussions of "physiognomic [amodal] perception," the aesthetic dimension can be related to the primary process understood in the broad sense explored in Chapter One. A psychodynamic account of the aesthetic dimension may eventually form the basis for a reformulation of the pleasure principle along lines independent from the problematic of the hungry baby. If that turns out to be so, then Freud's original speculations about the origins of thinking would have yielded four independent perspectives: the ego, the pain [-reality] principle, the object principle, and the pleasure principle.

Of course, any suggestion of a metapsychology which does not conform to the Constancy Principle is necessarily

speculative-- but no more so, I believe, than Freud's ultimate example of constancy itself: the concept of the death instinct. As Freud said, "it is surely possible to throw oneself into a line of thought and to follow it wherever it leads out of simple scientific curiosity" (1920, 59). The worst that could happen is that it would lead us 'beyond the pain principle.'

Before we go on to the next chapter it should be noted that Freud and Bion shared an intellectual foundation in the empiricist theory of knowledge: the conceptual language of sense data, memory traces, and associationist epistemology.¹⁸ Consequently, Bion's understanding of what thinking involves was, like Freud's, closely tied to classical assumptions about the functioning of the senses. According to the standard view, each of the external senses has its own distinct modality; and each modality undergoes a separate process of development: it follows that the business of relating the data taken in by each sensory modality to the data collected by the others implies a fairly lengthy process of learning, in which adaptation and coordination of initially chaotic and disparate perceptions are refined and consolidated. This idea that the senses are separate, undeveloped, and uncoordinated at birth has long been the view not only of the most influential psychoanalytic infant researchers (like Renee Spitz and Margaret Mahler), but of the even more influential behaviourists, and of cognitive psychologists like Piaget.

In consequence, it was no great leap for Bion to discuss the dissociated and confused sensory states of the psychotic patients he treated as regressions to an original mode of psychic functioning.

Combined with the post-Freudian, or Kleinian, emphasis on early affective object relations, the assumption that psychic process is something that develops out of a nucleus of atomic units naturally led Bion to conceive the baby's first efforts at thinking as catastrophic, fragmented, and unbounded. Given the undeniable force of an experience such as hunger or physical discomfort in a baby, it is not surprising that the drive, conceived as an increase of unpleasurable tension, should have such a devastating impact on an organism assumed to be living in a state of complete sensory detachment and uncoordination. But no such perfectly uncoordinated baby exists. That the infant is disposed to catastrophic experiences of fragmentation and diffusion is more than likely. It should be questioned, however, whether such phenomena occur meaningfully outside the realm of "thinking," as a kind of prethinking, or original state of the mind; or whether they do not already presuppose some form of the symbolizing process.

On both factual and theoretical grounds, as we shall see in the ensuing chapters, it does not seem likely that the baby can exist as an unalloyed manifestation of the 'id' for more than a few moments-- perhaps minutes-- at a time. There is, of course, no doubt that states of virtually

unmitigated want occur, not only in infants, but in adults as well. But the question remains: is hunger an adequate model of the primary experience of the drives? Or does it shed only partial light on the development of the most basic psychic activities, and reveal only a facet of the infant's capacity for pleasure and pain? What is at stake in the foregoing speculations on the baby's capacity to think is the issue of what we are prepared to accept as a fair description of the symbolizing process, and the conception we are inclined to adopt of the manner in which it develops. The argument that shall be put forth in the next few chapters is that there is no reason to believe that id phenomena conform to the ideal conception encountered in the classical psychoanalytic literature-- i.e., that situations of absolute demand for tension reduction occur in the utter absence of meaningful perception, cognition, imagination and 'affect.' Nothing compels us to postulate that psychic structure is a derivative of insentient 'thoughts' such as those inferred by Freud and Bion in their quest for the atomic building blocks of the psyche.

In the classical metapsychology, whose influence extends deep into the realm of post-Freudian thought (as I have attempted to show in the case of Bion), pain is the reason why people learn to do things, and why the "reality principle" develops out of the "pleasure principle." The conventional interpretation of this formulation is that the motive for the "perception" of reality lies in the flight of

the psyche from its own unpleasurable states. I see no reason to doubt that this orientation has a compelling validity. But it seems hardly adequate as a basis for a general psychology such as Hartmann and the ego psychologists envisaged, even within the restrictive terms of "adaptation" which have dominated modern psychology, and which Hartmann specifically proposed as the regulative idea of modern social thought. In fact, Hartmann himself addressed this problem very clearly when he pointed out that the concept of adaptation cannot be reduced to the assumption that "we take cognizance of the world only insofar as it causes pain."

An equally plausible interpretation of the material we have covered in this chapter is that pain is the result, rather than the cause, of the ability to perceive reality, whether psychic or internal, and that this pain has a profound emotional meaning for the infant, in the context of its sentient awareness of dependence on the object. I shall return to these problems later. But in the meantime it is clear that however one interprets the significance of pain in the life of the infant, we must conclude that it sheds only a partial light on the origins of thinking and the role of pleasure in the psychic functioning of the organism.

In The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud established the central and far-reaching role of pleasure in human psychology, and argued that even anxiety dreams were the expression and fulfillment of unconscious wishes. Yet,

throughout his discussion of drive-functioning, and the vignette of the hungry baby, we find at every stage of instinctual activity that pleasure is already in a subordinate position, that it is never involved in the initiation of a psychological sequence, and that it first appears only in connection with the disposal of the drive, the resolution or cancellation of psychic activity. In other words, the logic of the hungry baby is the logic of the pain [-reality] principle, or in other words, the logic of necessity.

Hunger itself is no fanciful erotic wish. Freud himself describes it as das Not des Lebens, the "exigencies of life," or the "vital needs." The hungry baby's kicking and screaming is perfectly realistic; it not only represents an actual state of the organism, it fulfills an important communicative function. Even the infant's "hallucination of gratification" is appropriate and representative. One can not say on the basis of the hungry baby model that the baby is "living in a dream world," that it is expecting the impossible from life, or that it has no clear idea of what it wants, or what is best for it. Freud's hungry baby is pragmatic and goal-oriented from top to bottom, and the story of its pursuit of instinctual gratification is an epitome of realism.

But this does not mean that Freud's little vignette is not essential; on the contrary, it played a major role in establishing two important considerations for psychological

research, both of which were made good in subsequent decades. It highlighted the psychological significance of the helplessness of the baby, and it suggested implicitly that the psyche is an ecological development-- that the human organism is inescapably oriented towards the environment, and more specifically to the primary caretakers. These facts may now seem trivial in themselves, but their role as basic problems for 'normal science' helped to maintain a breach in the otherwise dominant paradigm of the neonate as an oblivious isolate, a psychologically closed system incapable of symbolizing its own experience. It is to the evidence that the human infant is far from being a sensory or psychological isolate that I shall now turn in the next two chapters.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Freud (1915b, 178): "...there are no unconscious affects as there are unconscious ideas. But there may very well be in the system Ucs. affective structures which, like others, become conscious. The whole difference arises from the fact that ideas are cathexes -- basically of memory traces -- whilst affects and emotions correspond to processes of discharge, the final manifestations of which are perceived as feelings. In the present state of knowledge of affects and emotions we cannot express this difference more clearly." See also, Freud (1923, 19-27).

For a more refined and generous account of Freud's theory of affects, which takes into consideration the trends of his later work, see Emde (1980). Emde states: "Affects are composite states including motoric perceptions and direct feelings of pleasure and displeasure; they are rooted in biology; they include cognition and are evaluative; they function unconsciously as well as consciously; and they organize mental functioning and behaviour. All of these properties are included in Freud's [later] formulation that affects are signals, seated in the ego (68-9)."

2. Stern distinguishes "vitality" affects from "categorical" affects such as fear, anger, joy, sadness, and defines them in terms of the experience of "dynamic shifts or patterned changes within ourselves" (57). The idea of the vitality affect is drawn, in part, from Werner's (1934, 1948) discussion of "vital sensations" as the most primitive components of "syncretic thinking" in infancy. Werner argued that perception begins with "intersensory qualities" which have their basis "in the total psychophysical organism which functions as an undifferentiated unity." Werner wrote as if the whole body in infancy is a perceptual organ experiencing "synaesthetic qualities," and he distinguished these from percepts in the conventional sense: "Synaesthetic qualities are by nature dynamic qualities; they have their roots in the dynamism of body reaction in which the purely sensory act and the purely motor act are not yet differentiated" (1934, 166). This hypothesis of the continuity, in early infancy, of action and perception is comparable to the premise of Piaget's theory of sensorimotor learning. But there is a crucial difference between the two theories of sensory-cognitive development, as we shall see more clearly in the next chapter: Piaget presupposed the disconnectedness of the sensory modalities, and saw learning as a problem of coordination; whereas Werner emphasized what he felt to be the affective and aesthetic unity of infant experience.

3. See, Bronson (1982, 99-118), for a clearly-stated overview of infant brain development. For a more leisurely discussion of the same, see Restak (1986).

4. See Kant (1781, 201-208): "Anticipations of Perception;" Klossowski (1977, 111ff.).

5. This is the hypothesis of perinatal "interactive synchrony," based on data published by Condon and Sander (1974) which have never been reproduced in subsequent attempts to duplicate the experiment.

6. The succession of dualisms in the body of Freud's thought can be summarized in the following way: primary process vs secondary process (1900-39); sexual instincts vs self-preservative or ego instincts (1893-1911-15); object libido vs (narcissistic) ego libido (1915-20); Eros vs Thanatos (1920-39). To some extent, these pairs can be made to overlap, but none of them is homologous. An excellent discussion of the development of Freud's drive theory may be found in Compton 1981; 1983.

7. Even a sober medical research psychoanalyst like Renee Spitz (1959) was drawn, in the nineteen fifties, to a dialectical account of ego development. Starting with Freud's complementary series (the interaction of the congenitally inherited and the environmentally determined), Spitz's theory of "dependent development" posits that maturation and psychological development proceed together in synchronous stages, each marked by an "organizer" (i.e., the social smile, the eight month anxiety, the capacity to say 'no' at the onset of linguistic competence). The successful negotiation of each stage depends upon the satisfactory completion of the previous stage, in a trajectory from simple to complex psychic organization. The stages are problems of integration, or synthesis, and the integration proper to each stage is subsumed by the next one, which brings about a broader synthesis. This structure of conflict, resolution, and integration at a higher level-- or what Hegel called "aufhebung"-- is also characteristic of Erikson's (1950, 54ff.) contemporaneous "epigenetic" theory of psychological development.

Both Spitz and Erikson drew explicitly on the embryological models of the day, but the similarity of their reasoning to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit is inescapable. Like Mahler and others later on, they were drawing out the implications of Freud's metapsychology in a dialectical fashion in order to provide an integrated picture of infant development-- the path from simple elements and interactions to complex wholes. The problem with this approach is that although psychological development may indeed proceed in a sort of dialectical manner, there are an infinite number of dialectical models, depending on which "simple" or "nuclear" elements of psyche and environment one chooses to "unfold" the integrative series from.

8. For discussion of the place of the reflex arc model in psychoanalytic theory, see Gedo and Goldberg, 46-51.

9. Wolff (1967, 307): "This hallucinatory wish fulfillment is the precursor of veridical thought and constitutes the primary (or primitive) model of ideation in psychoanalysis." See also Rapaport (1950, 261): "The hallucinatory image is the archetype of thought."

10. For a characteristically clear and concise summary of all these points, see Anna Freud (1953, 13): "The hungry infant behaves in a peculiar manner toward its inner imagery....[H]e expects his own mental image of [mother's breast] to produce [stomach satisfaction]. Naturally this does not occur....With frequent repetitions of such experiences, the infant learns to distinguish between an inner image and the perception of a person in the outside world.... This new ability to distinguish between the perception of reality, on the one hand, and inner mental images, on the other hand, is one of the most significant advances in the infant's mental development."

11. This state of affairs did not change after 1920, when Freud speculatively subordinated the pleasure principle itself to the death instinct, in a revised consideration of the meaning of the Constancy hypothesis. The much debated significance of Freud's attempt to go "beyond" the pleasure principle will be discussed only briefly here in the context of the post-Freudian pain psychology of Klein and Bion. In passing, however, it is worth noting the following statement by Rapaport and Gill (1959, 157): "[The] law of entropy... is the statement of the pleasure principle in general terms. It is significant because it makes superfluous the postulation of a constancy 'principle' and a 'nirvana' principle, since these 'principles' represent only the effects of the entropy (pleasure) principle operating under diverse structural conditions."

12. In fact, it can be argued that the hallucinatory gratification of the drive, which Freud attributes exclusively to primary process thinking, presupposes some activity of the ego, since memory is usually described as an ego function. In the words of Schur (1966, 38): "A mental representation, according to psychoanalytic theory, is based on a memory trace. A memory trace, in turn, presupposes a perception of a stimulus which may originate from within or without the organism. Perception and memory, however, are generally considered to be ego functions." Schur also states (113): "The assumption that thought processes organized according to the primary process must also take place in the ego is implicit in every discussion of primitive wishes, fantasies, and defenses."

The significant question is when the requisite

cognitive functions come into play. According to much popular psychoanalytic theory, infants lack a sufficiently differentiated ego function to support Freud's original developmental hypotheses. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, for example, Winnicott (1962) doubted that the hungry baby model could apply until the end of the (primary undifferentiated) holding stage of development. In line with this, Lichtenberg (1987, 315) states: "...it seems unlikely that calming comes about in the awake infant as a result of conjuring up hallucinatory wish-fulfillment images of a breast. A more likely source of calming is actual sensory soothing by a caretaker or self action (thumb-sucking), or... the cued recall of the lived experience."

However, what Freud called hallucinatory gratification is, in essence, cued recall of lived experience (though Freud assumes that the baby confuses memory with perception). In my view, Freud's hypothesis is still a plausible one, if we assume that it pertains to affectively overdetermined (but not all) sectors of infant experience. Unfortunately, the theorists of primary undifferentiation, in their attempts to make the contradictory concept of primary narcissism more logically consistent, have tended to treat the most significant part of Freud's account as expendable: namely, his emphasis on the memory of the experience of pleasure.

There is general skepticism about Freud's (1900) reconstruction of the infant's imaginative ("hallucinatory") response to frustration. Piaget (1954, 5f., passim) argued that the infant during the first three or four stages of sensorimotor development is incapable of either cued recall or recognition memory. To anticipate the arguments in Chapter Six, Seven, and Eight, the following may be said in defence of Freud: Piaget's views, like those of many analysts (e.g., Sandler and Rosenblatt 1962; Fraiberg 1969; Stolorow 1978) are based on the assumption that object permanence and object constancy depend upon the sort of "representational" thinking that only emerges at 9, 18, or 24 months (depending on one's point of view)-- i.e., with language and concomitant mental functions. These assumptions are beginning to be challenged, notably by Butterworth (1987), Meltzoff (1981), and Meltzoff and Moore (1985). Critical discussions of Piaget's interpretation of the stage four and five place errors may be found in Bower (1979), Wishart and Bower (1984), and Spelke (1981, 1985). With regard to the specific question of retentive memory in infancy, Rovee-Collier (1987) and her associates have demonstrated convincingly that memory conservation in neonates has been vastly underestimated, particularly in studies based on the Piagetian model of intellectual development. An interesting critique of recent variations of representation theory in psychoanalysis may be found in Friedman (1980).

13. Moreover, on this basis, it would be logical (though not necessarily accurate) to expect that the hallucinated satisfaction will tend to be associated with the pain to be avoided-- the frustration of the drive (as Hartmann in the passage quoted above seems to suggest in the phrase "protection against anxieties aroused by fantasies"); while 'reality' itself-- if available in an 'average expectable' or 'good enough' way-- will begin to take on the connotations of pleasure (i.e., the reduction of painful drive tension).

The ambiguity of the model can be seen, for example, in the following passage from McDougall (1985): "What Freud named the normal hallucinatory satisfaction of infants is short-lived, and babies are rapidly overwhelmed by uncontrollable affect that might be called rage or even hate. Freud was also the first to point out that, in this state, nurslings need urgently to get rid of this torturing image of the breast-mother with which such feelings are immediately linked. The longed-for breast (and all it encompasses) becomes an object of horror whose representation is ejected from the psyche together with its accompanying affect" (184, emphasis added). If we were to take McDougall's description literally, we would have to assume that the infant very quickly shies away from thinking about the breast at all in its absence.

14. Occasionally, the claim is made that psychoanalysis has backed away from the revolutionary implications of Freud's early writings on sexuality. In this regard, the ego psychologists in particular tend to be singled out for having overprivileged the systematic and reductionistic strand in Freud's metapsychological thinking. But the same can be said of many others. Reich was a confirmed mechanist; Lacan adopts an exclusively linguistic approach to sexuality; and Bion, whom many consider to represent the antithesis of Freud in the spectrum of psychoanalytic theorizations, went even further than him in conceiving the functioning of mind in terms of the metaphor of the alimentary canal.

15. Freud (1915, 123): "...the instincts are all qualitatively alike and owe the effect they make only to the amount of excitation they carry, or perhaps, in addition, to certain functions of that quantity. What distinguishes from one another the mental effects produced by the various instincts may be traced to the difference in their sources." But, as Freud points out, "The study of the sources of instincts lies outside the scope of psychology," which effectively means that there can be no metapsychological basis for a qualitative distinction between the various drives.

16. Fairbairn (1954) argued very cogently that what we are calling the object principle should not be subordinated to the pain principle, and in this he disputed Freud; but

Fairbairn's solution only compounds the problem: he proposed simply to reverse the hierarchy, so that the workings of the pain principle could be seen as derivatives of the object principle. Both Freud and Fairbairn were concerned with what essentially motivates, and on this score it seems useless to try to adjudicate between the two positions. Who could ever hope to prove that love of the object is more or less powerful than fear of pain in the grand scheme of human affairs? From the point of view of how we conceptualize the symbolic process, it is far more important to decide whether pleasure-seeking has an independent meaning, or whether it is a derivative of pain avoidance. On this score, Freud and Fairbairn were in complete agreement.

17. However, Schur still regards the pleasure principle as a genetic derivative of the unpleasure principle (145), and still equates it with the need to reduce drive tension (143).

18. For discussion of Freud's reliance on the assumptions of classical associationist psychology and conditioning theory, see Wolff (1967, 303-314).

CHAPTER SIX
THE NORMAL SCIENCE
OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:
PARADIGMS AND ANOMALIES

...an attempt has been made to discredit scientific endeavour in a radical way, on the ground that, being bound to the conditions of our own organization, it can yield nothing else than subjective results, whilst the real nature of things outside ourselves remains inaccessible. But this is to disregard several factors.... [O]ur organization --that is, our mental apparatus-- has been developed precisely in the attempt to explore the external world, and must therefore have realized in its structure some degree of expediency.... [T]he problem of the nature of the world without regard to our percipient mental apparatus is an empty abstraction, devoid of practical interest (Freud 1927, 55-6).

Although Freud usually organized his account of psychic life in dualistic terms, he always tried to understand the complexity of which he was such a keen observer in terms of a unifying principle. For the psyche, this principle was the theory of the drives, but that led him to a further dualism: in addition to pleasure and pain, hallucination and reality, he thought in terms of primary and secondary-- or in other words, reality and epiphenomenon, infrastructure and superstructure, nature and culture. He was a reductionist. On the one hand, Freud believed, with the scientific insistence of his day, that there was the whole of reality, life, world and cosmos as they really are. On the other hand, his work suggests that whatever we can know

of this 'reality' is limited by the modifications and developments of the history of the drive. For Freud, "Reality will always remain 'unknowable'"-- and this is as true of psychic reality and the unconscious as it is of "external reality."

It is certainly possible to argue, with Freud, that whatever we come to know of the world in general is inseparable, in the last analysis, from its basis in evolution. All of our activities would be chapters of our instinctual history-- but this apparently flagrant reductionism-- Darwinian in its monism, Nietzschean in its monstrosity-- forces us into a remarkable paradox. It means that even the most effective forms of our knowledge must be interpretations. We are but parts of a whole--the drive is only a part of reality-- and no matter how much we learn about ourselves, and regardless of how far the drives take us in our exploration of the mysteries of 'nature,' we will always exist, in relation to reality, as parts in relation to a whole, mere denizens of an illusive "hermeneutic circle."

In his most rationalistic moments, Freud (1927) entertained the idea that the limited nature of the drive could be overcome; that, by some quantitative accumulation of knowledge and understanding, a qualitative transformation could take place in the status of our knowledge. Then we would be able not only to refute, but to relinquish without regret all unscientific thought-- religion in particular.

What Freud never seriously entertained, however, was the possibility that the 'origins' of the psyche are more diverse than his phylogenetic reasoning led him to suspect-- that only a part of mind is derived from the constancy principle, that only an aspect of psyche emerges from the dynamics of pleasure and pain, or the gratification and frustration of the drive. Such a perspective would imply not only that the elements which Freud fused in his metapsychology are distinct in principle -- that sexual desire is different from hunger, and that the satisfactions of consumption are not quite the same as the satisfactions of discharge-- but that there are primary elements of mind which are different from drives as such, yet coequal with them: notably (given our present, limited knowledge) perception (including self-perception), or in other words, our capacity for physical experience; and emotion, our capacity to register this experience in terms of feeling. In addition to these psychophysiological givens, we can probably add an inbuilt libidinal orientation to our environment, which is highlighted by an innate recognition of, and a marked curiosity about, others like us.

I have suggested that the psyche be considered as an emergent symbolic property of the interplay of all these components of 'mind'-- drive, cognition, affect, ecological orientation, and whatever senses it turns out we have (in addition to what Blake called the "five caverns"). This approach, and the concepts it brings together, will not

overcome the partiality of our knowledge of 'reality,' as most contemporary sages see it. But the new point of view does present a challenge to the traditional philosophical positions which have made the fact that our knowledge is only partial their starting point: in particular, transcendentalism and epistemological skepticism. Transcendentalism teaches us that knowledge is proof that there is something greater than sense, feeling, and appetite, and skepticism teaches that because there is nothing greater than these three, our knowledge is proof of nothing. Like the great religions, both assume that the nature of human error lies in the limitations of the body, and conclude therefore that mind is either a revelation, or else another example of wishful sensory deception. From the point of view of the symbolic process, neither position makes much sense. We can no longer so confidently derive our ultimate ignorance from one principle (e.g., the dominance of the drive, or the "death of God"). Instead, we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that our difficulties arise from a variety of sources (neither simply the body nor the mind), and we must grapple with the daunting complexity of their combinations. We are willy-nilly somewhere in the middle of nature, and we must give up the illusion that we can establish a foundational grip-- even a negative one-- on one part of it.

Although some notion of drive (usually in the form of a theory of the appetites) has always been a consideration,

the critical focus of occidental thought has usually been on the sensory apparatus as such. Augustine, Bonaventure, Spinoza, and many others were sensitive to the effects of appetite on cognition. But from the vantage point of modern thought, the main line of development, since Plato's parable of the cave, and through Lockean associationism, has been primarily epistemological; the ruling assumption has been that the complexities and uncertainties of human affairs are ultimately to be understood, like the more pressing question of truth, in relation to the fundamental problem of perception. A vestige of this deep-seated belief is preserved in the psychiatric criterion of the "observing ego." So long as there is an observing ego in communication with the external world, the senses are deemed to be reasonably in tact, and the resolution of conflict is possible. Madness has long been described as a disorder of the senses-- a "dereglement," as Rimbaud put it-- as if it were primarily through the training and synthesis of the perceptual functions that sanity and order are conferred by the "mind" on the otherwise unruly body. (Freud's own pessimistic evaluation of psychosis as a "disturbance in the relation between the ego and the external world" suggests he believed that congenital defects might play a determining role in some cases of derangement, although he never seriously addressed the possibility that perception and other psychophysical factors might develop independently of the instinctual drives as regulated by the pain principle

[Freud 1924a, 149-51; see also 1937, 267-8].)

Concern over the fallibility of the senses, and the part played by them in the (mis)construction of knowledge, is common to all the extremes of the philosophical heritage, from skepticism and realism to 'idealism' and 'materialism.' There are probably two main versions of this philosophical worry about the status of our knowledge. For convenience's sake, and with the bias of hindsight, let us describe them as rationalism and empiricism. The more august of these traditions, rationalism, stems from the generally Platonic idea that everything worth knowing is already in the mind (and that the senses of themselves can furnish only an approximate and misleading caricature of 'truth'). From this point of view, 'reality' must reside somewhere in the models or Forms out of which apparent knowledge is constructed-- and certainly not in the shifting contents of physical experience themselves. This tradition of thinking has been strongly reinforced by the modern emphasis on language and logic, the revival of the Pythagorean notion that 'reality' has a logical (if no longer necessarily harmonious) structure, and the rise of the view that perception is determined by models implicit in learned language and/or culture.

Against this more or less 'holistic' view of cognition, a very effective and fruitful opposition developed from the atomistic strains of thought already emergent in Plato's time. The origins of empiricism are, of course, usually

traced to Locke's "theory of knowledge," which retained the centrality of Plato's "Idea" as the cornerstone of cognition, but turned it upsidedown, and gave it a physicalistic interpretation. What for Plato was a unique, coherent, and discrete totality preexisting experience-- the 'Idea'-- became, in the seventeenth century, a relatively arbitrary compound of discrete psycho-physical experiences. Knowledge for Locke consisted in tokens of sensory registration, added up through habitual connections or "associations" (what we now call 'conditioning') to form not only complex Ideas, but ordinary common sense perception. Although the original form of Lockean sensationalism has long since been abandoned, its basic assumptions are far from being out of favour.

Like Plato's formalism, Locke's atomism has been cleansed of naive realism, and survives in the hypothesis that cognition is a construction from discrete elements. The most recent example is the structuralist paradigm of a combinatorial of signifying units, or signifiers, which are said to come together through habit or convention or chance into more or less arbitrary constellations which produce the phenomenon of the 'signified,' or the 'effect' of meaning.

The original strength of the empiricist tradition was that it appeared to provide a workable explanation of ordinary bodily experience, the precise reasons for doubting it-- and perhaps most importantly, the reasons for exploring it further. From this vantage point, compelling questions

could be raised with regard to the adequacy of conventional and received ideas about the nature of mind, body and world. Hence, one is tempted to say that the rise of science goes hand in hand with empiricism in philosophy. But this would be a drastic oversimplification. The rationalists have always been able to point to the gap dividing even our most fruitful ideas from the limited experience that we actually have of objects, and upon which we pretend to base our knowledge of them. (A very effective contemporary form of the rationalist reply to empiricism can be found in Sir Karl Popper's work.) In fact, "rationalism" and "empiricism" seem to be related at some deep level, and may even be deemed complementary points of view (but cf. Chomsky 1981, 20f.). Their apparent contrast easily dissolves in close up, for they are rooted in common assumptions, and it is difficult to imagine how one of them could be abandoned without also weakening the other, and perhaps even jeopardizing the structure of thought and inquiry as we know it today.

There is probably no foreseeable way of bringing an end to the purely philosophical controversy over the manner in which units of sense or intellect should be brought together in order to produce proper understanding and common sense, or correct representations in the mind. But whether or not such an impasse is inevitable, it constitutes a kind of centre of tension in the history of thought which implicitly binds rationalism and empiricism. Both are conjoined in

the crucible of perception, and both are driven to establish the proper relations between perception (the body) and truth (knowledge). Rationalists and empiricists alike are inclined to assume that there is something in the process of arriving at our knowledge that imposes order upon the world that we are actually in (however indirectly, be it through culture, technology, language, or mind). In other words, the world that we really encounter through our bodies is assumed to start out as a chaos which is somehow put in order by learning or knowing. The nature-chaos/ mind-order perspective appears to have been accepted fairly consistently throughout our culture, even when nature was thought to be a regular clockwork, or the passive environment of a spiritual being itself existing beyond sensory experience. No doubt there have been exceptions, but in general it seems true that philosophy has believed profoundly in the notion that there is something in the composition of the educated or 'grown-up' human which accounts for an experience of orderliness in the world which the otherwise natural, but nevertheless anomalous infant organism wholly lacks.

The standard rationalist approach has been to argue that physical, sensory experience is helpless without the structuring agency of the developed mind, its innate forms or logical accomplishments. By themselves, organismic relations in the world are either false (Plato) or chaotic and meaningless (Kant). According to the empiricist view,

on the other hand, the discreteness of the senses and the material upon which they act, however orderly they may be in principle, must gradually be collected together into coherent and regular perceptions through 'learning' and habit, and built up into representative ideas by means of association and reinforcement. In effect, both traditions rely on the assumption that the experiential relation of the human body to the world around it is in itself undifferentiated, formless, and probably meaningless; and that, in order to 'make sense,' even the most routine forms of perception require that something be added by the mind to bodily experience (i.e., nonsensory forms such as Ideas and logical categories; or mental operations such as association by contiguity or 'accumulation of experience'). There is nothing closer to common sense than this, and it remains especially influential today in strong versions of the language paradigm-- those which border on linguistic epistemology or ontology, where the old theological idea that the human situation never quite manages to coincide with 'nature' or 'world' seems to persist, albeit in sophisticated modern form.

The rationalist and empiricist standpoints are based on plenty of straightforward *prima facie* psychobiological evidence. There has never been any real doubt that the human body can easily be deceived about the precise nature of its psychomotor situation at any given time. We regularly report sensations of movement in relation to earth when in

fact some other object, an adjacent vehicle for example, is shifting ground. The rise of developmental psychology has done a great deal to reinforce this kind of argument. If few would insist that the adult's belief in a stable and predictable world is based solely on the evidence of the senses, it should hardly be surprising to learn that infants are especially prone to errors of interpretation. Ordinary perception is highly schematic, governed to a large extent by habitual expectations, which have to be learned. An infant has very few habits against which to measure information about its physical interactions with the environment. It is therefore natural to assume that the infant's perceptual life will be largely composed of error and confusion, and that it will take some time before the child will have learned enough to achieve a coherent and reliable perception of its environment.

If one thinks in terms of the kind of information that a sensory end organ transmits to the brain, and if one thinks of these end organs as functionally separate mechanisms, then it is difficult to imagine how an infant could possibly see or hear with any kind of clarity. William James, in a much quoted phrase, described the perceptual world of infants as a "blooming, buzzing confusion," and Renee Spitz (1965), a pioneer of neonatal research, compared infant vision to the blurry field of light experienced by the congenitally blind when their sight is first restored (40-2, 53-61). The prevailing assumption

has always been that, in early childhood, there is no perception of depth, little or no differentiation of objects, shape, colour, size, or texture, little appreciation of time, and no awareness of the external and separate existence of the environment in relation to the self (a sense of which is also regarded as absent at this time of life).

According to Spitz, "the infant's inability to perceive his surround lasts for a number of weeks...;" "the infant reacts to the external stimulus only when it coincides with the baby's interoceptive perception of hunger... the perception of the surround is predicated upon tension generated by an ungratified drive" (50). Spitz denied that the untrained senses could function either autonomously or in coordination with each other, and this view was echoed by most developmental psychologists. The corollary of these findings was that the beginning of postnatal psychological life was thought to be restricted to undifferentiated proximal (local bodily) sensations, and that the ability to distinguish (let alone position) the self in relation to the things around it in visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory and motor terms could only emerge when the central nervous system (CNS) matures and experience is gained. Freud described this state of affairs as "primary narcissism," Heinz Werner (1948) called it the "primitive mentality," Margaret Mahler (1975) used the expression "primary autism," and Piaget (1954) called it "adualistic confusion."

It follows from these considerations, of course, that perception must be learned (or else organized by something irreducible to sensory experience). This is what developmental psychology has predominantly been about: the acquisition, construction, or conditioning of the 'reality sense,' or what Freud called "reality testing," which is the foundation of the reality principle and the most basic of all the ego functions.

Nevertheless, the idea that perception needs to be explained by learning or by something 'mental' -- at the extreme, through the acquisition of language or culture -- has been challenged, notably by J.J. Gibson, whose critique of classical epistemology can be illustrated in terms of the problem of the visual perception of spatial depth. Since the retinal image is two-dimensional, it has generally been assumed that the eye as an end organ does not convey enough information to the brain to account for the subjective impression of three-dimensional configurations in space. The natural conclusion has been that what we take to be 'normal' vision is actually a hybrid: sensory data is supplemented by non-visual information, which is either contained in concepts, such as the 'idea' of space, or acquired by learning (or perhaps wired into the CNS). This additional information would either be an innate three-dimensional framework characteristic of the human mind-- what Kant called the 'a priori' or 'transcendental' forms of perception-- or stored data about space, derived from non-

visual experiences such as motor activity, which come to be habitually combined with the two-dimensional image on the retina to produce the conscious visual experience of a three dimensional field. In other words, whether the 'idea' of space is considered to be innate or learned, it is never the product of the visual system alone.

Gibson's reply to all this was to deny that the perception of visual depth depends on an 'idea' or mental construct of three-dimensional space. In 1934, the neuropsychologist Lashley (Lashley & Russel) had already demonstrated something like this in the case of rats. Lashley argued that the rat's perception of spacial extent and depth in the visual field is "not acquired by learning, but... the product of some innately organized neural mechanism" (271).¹ His rats could accurately assess three dimensional space when presented with visual information for the first time, and even make accurate motor judgments of distance on this basis. Lashley's subjects had been deprived of light, but since they had still been able to move about, it is possible that the "innately organized neural mechanism" to which he referred really had something to do with a capacity to translate the information acquired by one sensory modality immediately into the coordinates of another sense-- in this case, blind tactual exploration of space into visual judgment of depth. If that is so, then it is still possible that the performance of Lashley's rats did benefit from some kind of learning, even though he had

definitively ruled out the possibility of previous visual learning.

Whereas Lashley emphasized the neural (but not mental) organization of perception, Gibson was concerned with the capacity of the sensory system to take in information from the stimulus array. He stressed that depth can actually be perceived; it is an 'objective' property of our ecological frame of reference, like gravity and physical texture. He conducted experiments in which he purported to show that information about three-dimensional space is indeed received by the eye, mainly through exploration of the distribution of light and the perception of gradients. From this, Gibson concluded that the senses are really interrelated "perceptual systems" oriented to the "ecological niche" of the organism, and that skeptical arguments based on the "subjectivity" of perception are exaggerated. There is no need, according to Gibson, to import philosophical hypotheses about the universal mental (or contingent behavioural) supplementation of passively received "sensations" or data in order to explain ordinary sensory functioning, since the perceptual systems are reasonably capable of doing the basic work of perception by themselves.

Gibson described his theory as an attempt to "escape the fallacies of mentalism on the one hand and those of stimulus-response behaviourism on the other" (1982, 398). Unfortunately, he tended to advance this cause in an overly objectivistic fashion. If one analyses the concept of

"perceptual system," it is easy to see that the problem of 'subjective interpretation' remains at one remove, even if it has been pushed into the background by Gibson's deeper appreciation of the integrity of the bodily connection with the environment. But whatever the philosophical limitations of Gibson's position, his work may be taken as a significant challenge to the plausibility of the rationalist-empiricist epistemological vocabulary.² Gibson does not deny that perception is suffused with subjective bias, relativity, and confusion; but he insists that there is a limit to the efficacy of prevailing hypotheses designed to subordinate the body to the governance of mind. For Gibson, there is something called "literal perception" which is irreducible to mental categories, even though it can only be demonstrated under carefully controlled conditions which suspend the normally "schematic" framework of experience. In this respect, his work runs parallel to early twentieth century phenomenology, which believed in the possibility of a kind of regression to the senses, or "eidetic reduction." He insisted that intentionality does not necessarily entail a lack of objectivity or directness of perception.³ This is a claim which can be taken in two ways: either it is an example of naive realism; or it is a refreshing plea for acceptance of the sensory systems as animal components of an irreducible physical and ecological situation which cannot be thought away with theories about cultural, spiritual or linguistic transcendence.

Gibson's views have been taken up by researchers interested in the sensory-cognitive experiences of new-born babies (Bower 1974; Butterworth 1982a, 1983; Walker-Andrews 1988). Lashley's demonstration of spontaneous visual-motor coordination recalls the discovery in the early 1960's that neonates in the delivery room will orient their gaze in the direction of a sound-- an indication of some degree of unlearned audio-visual-motor coordination in humans (Wertheimer, 1961; see also Stratton 1982, 210). A decade later, neonatologists began to devise more elaborate means of exploring these potentials. Bower et al. (1970a) uncovered an unexpected visual-motor accuracy in neonatal reaching behaviour. The subjects of these experiments were all between 6 and 11 days of age; most of them groped within a centimetre and a half of an object dangled approximately eight inches away. Bower considered this evidence of very early visual orientation in space, but he also wanted to determine whether this behaviour was "intentional," rather than merely random, as it would be in the case of indiscriminate thrashing. Accordingly, he presented infants between 8 and 31 days both real and virtual objects of visual perception, and found that those presented with the virtual object (as opposed to those presented with the graspable object) were frustrated by the stereoscopic illusion, and abandoned the attempt to reach it in the subsequent test. In other words, they wanted to touch what they saw, and were confused when the object eluded their

grasp, a result which Bower took to be evidence of intentional behaviour in the first month of life.

[Incidentally, this result suggests that we should discard Rorty's (1982, 200) contention that "possessing intentionality" signifies nothing more than "suitable to be described anthropomorphically as if it were a language user."] In another experiment, Bower and his associates (1970b) found that infants reacted defensively to an object which appeared to be moving directly toward them, as if on a collision course, but not when an object was moving on a trajectory passing slightly to the left or right. This suggests a precocious ability to judge the position and movement of objects relative to the self.

According to a growing body of literature, it is turning out that even a neonate is able to tell roughly where its body is in the scheme of things and, within the limits of early motor capacity, to adjust accordingly. Under normal conditions, an infant can judge whether it is still or moving relative to other objects, adjust for balance on the basis of visual cues, and seems to compensate visually for variations in size and shape as a function of distance (object constancy). With regard to object constancy -- that is, conservation of an object's identity through change (in size, shape, pitch, etc.) relative to the perceiving subject -- Bower and Wishart (1979) maintain that the baby will "habituate"⁴ to an object (in their example, a cube) just as much if the position of the object frequently

changes as when it remains still. The infant recognizes and grows used to the cube through a series of ten different presentations, suggesting that the infant "must remember from presentation to presentation that there is a cube out there, without remembering the orientation of the cube. This kind of memory is really rather abstract. It is almost as abstract as a word is" (73). According to Butterworth, these perceptual capacities can be detected long before they might have been constructed through trial and error learning or 'circular reactions' (Piaget) during motor activity. He states (1983, 11) that "Objective knowledge of space and of the body may develop because the infant is already responsive to the spatial structure of the environment, and this spatial sensitivity provides feedback about the body itself." "It is reasonable to speculate that information for the basic distinction between infant and environment may be available and effective" in the first months of life (1982b, 149); the perceptual distinction between self and environment is implicit, and occurs without the conceptual underpinnings that accompany later sensori-motor development as described by Piaget (see also Butterworth 1987).

Jean Piaget's work remains without any doubt the most eminent and influential body of thought on the subject of human development, with the possible exception of that of Freud. Like Freud, he was able to restructure received ideas about perception on the basis of indirect evidence arising from other areas of research. In relation to the

twin heritage of empiricism and rationalism, his studies constitute one of the major syntheses of the epistemological tradition. He was versed in the philosophical issues which had emerged in the evolution of the scientific world view, and confronted them directly with remarkable protocols for the observation of child development.

Like a rationalist, Piaget argued that the perception of an object depends on the concept of an object; but like an empiricist, he felt that the governing concepts of perception could only arise through the infant's more and more active physical explorations of the environment. According to Piaget, the child's sustained responses to stimuli (or 'circular reactions') gradually give rise to schemes of action, which simultaneously condition perception. These responses are not determined unilaterally by the stimulus, for they depend also on the mental structures (schemas, concepts) through which the stimulus is filtered (assimilation), and upon which the stimulus in turn has a modifying influence (accommodation). Piaget argued that there can be no functional detection of particularities and differences in the perceptual field without such (proto-) conceptual structures to support them, and this applies especially to the problem of the infant's awareness of two fundamental features of the object world: difference from the perceiver's body, and continued existence (object permanence) during periods of absence, neither of which shows definite signs of developing until at least eight

months. (For a lucid summary of Piaget's theory of development, see Piaget & Inhelder 1969).

Piaget's insight that the development of perception and thinking is centrally linked to active bodily experience cannot be understood in terms of traditional empiricist inductivism; indeed, it is an explicit attempt to go beyond that model of learning without resorting to a nativist account of the conceptual structures underlying perception. What is novel in Piaget's approach, distinguishing his work from both 'pure' empiricist and rationalist frameworks, is that repetitions of experience are seen to contribute to psychological development through qualitative conceptual transformations rather than through simple accumulations. Piaget determined that there are six distinct 'stages' of sensorimotor development prior to the acquisition of language. In contradistinction to the unitary character of the rationalist's 'Idea,' a Piagetian sensorimotor schema (or later logico-semiotic concept) is derived from bodily experience, which is contingent on the world as it happens to be; but in contrast to the empiricist's composite idea, which is also derived from experience, Piaget's various schemata are not related to experience as mere agglomerations or generalizations of particular events. Stated crudely, his position was that the actions of the body generate a kind of organizing metaphor for exploring the nature of the surround, which is initially undifferentiated from the body; and these actions, or

circular reactions, are elaborated into logical constructs about the properties and relations of objects in space on the basis of proprioceptive and proximal feedback. Moreover, this "cognitive adaptation" (Piaget 1971, 66), though capable of achieving representational objectivity, is not simply the passive reflection of an independent, external reality: "...knowledge is never a 'copy' [of the environment] but must, of necessity, be an assimilation to action schemata of growing complexity" (337).⁵

Although Piaget understands the simplest facts of perception as hard-won achievements of developmental learning, he by no means conceives the neonate as a tabula rasa, and does not deny that the infant is equipped at birth with certain basic orientations to the environment-- for example, sucking, and the complex behaviour which is elicited at the presentation of the breast. His point is that these orientations are not perceptual experiences, but schematic behaviour patterns. To say that the infant "recognizes" the mother's breast is not to say that it is capable of recognition memory of the breast (i.e., that the breast is remembered as the same breast previously encountered); and even less to say that the infant is capable of cued recall (i.e., that hunger activates a memory trace of the absent breast). The latter would imply 'conservation,' or "object permanence," which according to Piaget is not acquired until the third or fourth sensorimotor stage. Piaget's position here is in fact part

of his general critique of empiricism and associationist psychology:

If, in order to recognize a thing, it is really necessary to have retained the image of that thing, and if recognition results from an association between this image and actual sensation, then naturally the conserved image will be able to act in the mind when the object itself is absent and thus suggest the idea of conservation. [But this early type of recognition] is only the realization of mutual conformity between a given object and a schema all ready to assimilate it.... [T]he thing recognized stimulates and feeds the sensorimotor schema which was previously constructed for its use, and without any necessity for evocation (Piaget 1954, 5-6).

To continue, then, with breast-feeding as an example of a coordinated neonatal behaviour: according to Piaget, the infant may demonstrate complete familiarity with an activity, and the object associated with it, without having an organized experience of the event, without perceiving the event, and without retaining an image of it. If we think in terms of unconscious phenomena such as the body schema, motor memory ("knowing" how to ride a bicycle), or Freud's "repetition compulsion," Piaget's hypothesis is not as implausible as it may sound. The infant functions entirely at the level of the schematism, which only gradually develops through the stages of sensorimotor learning, by means of assimilation and accommodation, to the point where "representations" of experience, and thus recall memory, become possible. It is worth noting that the Piagetian system thus rules out or defers some of the more interesting

implications of Freud's hungry baby model until much later in the infant's development. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, this became the view not only of the ego psychologists who attempted to integrate Piagetian developmental psychology into psychoanalytic theory, but also of Winnicott and the object-relations school, and anyone else concerned to minimize or counterbalance the drive perspective in psychoanalytic psychology.

Piaget's emphasis on the role of motor interaction with the environment in the growth of cognition, together with his specific contributions to our understanding of this process, have been indispensable in the evolution of subsequent research. Like drives and reflexes, the sensorimotor adaptations and trial and error constructions which Piaget studied are indisputably significant dimensions of the documented totality of behavioural phenomena. But when Piaget's system of genetic epistemology is interpreted narrowly to mean that perception and cognition are derivative of motor behaviour (and dependent on the conceptual structures emerging from such behaviour), it reaches the same kind of explanatory barrier encountered by the traditional behaviourist and Freudian accounts of infant-caretaker attachment.⁶ In the latter cases, as we have already seen, the infant's affective relation to the mothering figure was explained as the secondary by-product of reinforcement achieved through repeated drive- (i.e., hunger-) reduction. Like the Freudo-behaviourist theory of

motivation, the academic status of Piaget's theory of the sensori-motor schema seems gradually to be shifting, under the pressure of recent research, from that of an adequate explanation of all the developmental facts to that of a plausible account of some of them. As Aslin (1985, 178) comments: "It may be that no single overriding theory of cognitive development is either possible or desirable."

Rovee-Collier and Lipsitt (1982) report in their survey of neonatological conditioning experiments that learning takes place rapidly during the neonatal period, when the behavioural repertoire is minimal. They argue that the previously undetected adaptability of the infant is based on sensory-cognitive receptivity, and conclude that "laboratory studies...grossly underestimate newborn competence" (120).⁷ With the increasing evidence of neonatal competence, Piaget's view that cognition is an outgrowth of sensori-motor performance has been thrown into doubt. In the view of Fantz, Fagan, and Miranda (1975, 249) "the limited response capabilities during the early months of life had in earlier decades led to the assumption of a visual-perceptual void until the infant was able to interact actively with the environment and so to 'learn to perceive.'" In contrast to this, they argue that "recent findings give further basis for the assertion that in humans perception precedes action." Atkinson and Braddick (1982) echo the view that the relation between action and perception may initially be the reverse of Piaget's hypothesis: "...in the early months

infants have an ability to take in information from the material and social world around them which far outstrips their limited capability to intervene in that world: an assymetry which suggests that the primary modes of learning in this period may be rather different from those of later infancy when manipulation is so prominent in the child's interaction with the world" (191).⁸

Piaget (1954, xiii) described human development from birth to conceptual knowledge as "the transition from chaos to cosmos," and in this his account was essentially congruent with Freud's drive model as it was generally interpreted prior to the rise of ego psychology and object-relations theory. Piaget argued that during most of the first year of life, but especially during the first three or four months, "the universe presents neither permanent objects, nor objective space, nor time interconnecting events as such, nor causality external to the personal actions" (xii-xiii). Piaget's stage 1 and 2 child lives in a phenomenalist world characterized by shifting "pictures ...which disappear and reappear capriciously" (4). Psychological states during this period consist of "radical egocentrism... phenomenism without self-perception" (xiii); the infant is plunged into an "undifferentiated universe of... adualistic consciousness (since in the beginning nothing is experienced [even] as subjective" (6). According to Piaget, the child has no concept of objects because "the vanished object is not yet for him a permanent object which

has been moved; it is a mere image which reenters the void as soon as it vanishes, and emerges from it for no objective reason" (11).

In this primary, egocentric state of 'adualistic confusion,' Piaget admits no awareness of any difference between the organism and the environment. But this should not be taken to imply that he conceived the infant's world as a continuum. Piaget's infant experiences only proximal sensations. If it cannot distinguish between proprioception and perception, it cannot link them either. The information impinging on the sensory modalities is entirely unrelated at birth, so that "in the beginning there exists neither a single space nor a temporal order which contains objects and events.... There are, rather, several heterogeneous spaces all centered on the child's own body-- buccal, tactile, visual, auditory, and postural spaces-- and certain temporal impressions... but without objective coordination" (Piaget & Inhelder, 15). The problem for Piaget was therefore to explain how the child's fragmented sensorium is "gradually coordinated" as it develops from an "initial practical solipsism to the construction of a universe which includes himself as an element," a "universe [which] is really cut up into objects, that is, into things conceived as permanent, substantial, external to the self, and firm in existence even though they do not directly affect perception" (Piaget 1954, 97, 5).

Like the psychoanalytic conception of an initial

"autistic" (Mahler) or "narcissistic" phase of psychological life, Piaget's theory of perceptual "adualism" is linked directly to a theory about the cognitive status of the object during the early stages of life. Starting from the image of the infant during the first six months as an apersonal site of sensory impressions in the void (where there is no object for a subject, and no subject of an object), he set out to demonstrate the sensori-motor development of the object concept (and, by philosophical implication, the construction of a conscious subject as well) with the aid of a fascinating series of observations. He noticed that when infants are about eight or nine months old (stage 3), the mere occlusion of a visual stimulus leads to a total loss of interest if they have not already handled the object which has caught their attention. He concluded from this that although the infant has by this time acquired the minimal sensorimotor skill to facilitate the visual perception of things, objects nevertheless cease to exist as soon as they disappear from view. Some rudimentary sense of the permanence of things has by this time emerged (Piaget 1954, 41), but not enough to constitute the object concept (27), since "the universe still presents itself to the subject as depending on his activity" (20).

After nine months, according to Piaget, infants begin to perceive (but not conceive) objects in three-dimensional terms, and to establish size and shape constancy (152-183). At this stage, the infant learns to find a thing in the

place where he or she saw it being concealed (under a cup), even if the infant has not been permitted to manipulate it beforehand. The crucial factor at this juncture of Piaget's theory is that the infant begins to produce the famous 'stage four place error,' which involves "failure" to retrieve an object if it has been hidden again in a different place (under a second cup). In this experiment, the act of concealment is always conducted in full view. The infant nevertheless searches under the first cup, even though it has observed the object disappearing under the second. According to Piaget, this means that the object at this stage still lacks solidity, identity and permanence. The child beginning its second year still perceives things as if they were contingent images produced by its own actions, behaves as if there may be several different versions of an object, each tied to an habitual perceptual context (e.g., daddy-standing-next-to-me, daddy-in-his-office), and continues to doubt the existence of objects out of view (1954, 44-66). It is not until stages 5 and 6, when the child is approaching the age of two, that something resembling the object concept emerges.

In stage 5, there is still much evidence of confusion about the properties of everyday objects, but the child succeeds in finding the object that is hidden in a second place so long as he or she sees it being hidden; moreover, children at this age will begin to explore the environment more actively and persistently than before. In the sixth

and final stage of sensorimotor development, the "object concept," as Piaget defines it, is achieved. The child searches for the object even though its concealment was itself concealed, which means for Piaget that the child has now learned that objects continue to exist and to conserve their properties independently of the observer, and regardless of their position in space and in relation to other objects. In short, the child as a perceptual being has acquired the ability to "represent" the object to itself, and to imagine ("deduce") various relations between the object and the rest of the environment, even though the object is not 'present' and its position is not known. The behaviour which clinched this interpretation for Piaget occurred at around twenty months.

Most of the sensorimotor task experiments Piaget conducted have been replicated (sometimes at earlier ages), and the infant's retrieval failures and errors during stages 3, 4, and 5 have all been reproduced with other children. But numerous objections have been raised to Piaget's interpretation of early object-behaviour and several alternative explanations of the task errors have emerged (for critical reviews of the literature, see Gratch 1975; Schubert 1983). The main focus of the dispute has to do with Piaget's inference that children have no awareness of the permanence of objects until the end of the second year--his assumption that for the preoperational child, 'out of sight' is equivalent to 'out of mind' (Bower 1979, 144-47).

In the stage 4 place error, Piaget's child expected to find the object where it had originally been hidden, under the first cup, and not under the second, where it had subsequently been placed. A curious fact about this experiment is that it can be duplicated with transparent cups (Bower 1975, 43-4). The standard explanation that the child's difficulties at this age arise from an inability to represent an absent object seems to fall down in this case, since the object is not even absent, which suggests that the cognitive 'failure' may have some other origin. In a variation of the cup experiment, which Piaget himself devised, the displaced and concealed object is not retrieved even when it emits a noise. For Piaget, this was confirmation that infants are unable to link up different sensory modes of experiencing the same object. According to this view, the sound of a thing and its visual appearance are interpreted as unrelated phenomena until stage 6 (18-24 months). Yet a four month infant will reach for an object emitting sound in the dark, and grasp an object which has been plunged into darkness immediately after presentation. He or she will also shape the reaching hand as if to expect that the "stimulus" is a three-dimensional solid with a hidden back. The infant does not act as if things lack external being and extension, or as if they cease to exist when no longer perceived. A number of experiments have been conducted in which infants much younger than Piaget's stage 4 were quite happy to track objects disappearing from view

behind a screen and reappearing on the other side. There is no consensus about how to bring together all of these results, but it seems clear that conceptual difficulties with objects in early childhood are highly specific, and do not bear on the issue of the infant's general concept of three-dimensional permanent objects in the way that Piaget thought.

It has generally been assumed that until they are at least nine (if not eighteen or twenty four) months of age, humans are incapable of symbolizing or imaging their own experience. This is usually supported by the view that the neonatal sensorium lacks coordination. There is no doubt that the different sensory modalities are immature at birth (although in fact the optic nerve is already myelinated); but in addition to this, it is still widely taken for granted that the senses function discretely and without reference to each other for much, if not all, of the first year. Given this assumption, which was shared by Piaget, Spitz, and the great majority of research psychologists, there has been a natural tendency to conclude that the infant CNS lacks any kind of central sorting mechanism which would permit sensory information to be collated and stored in "representational" form.

The problem of "representation" in infancy was linked by Piaget to the whole question of when the child acquires the ability to imitate the behaviour of others. He proposed the widely held view that true imitation would be impossible

until the object concept has been established, since imitation requires that the infant have some means of coordinating information from different sensory modalities and matching it against a proprioceptive representation, or body scheme, which is only possible if there is some cognitive distinction between the body and the object of perception. Common reports that neonates will stick out their tongues in response to their parents' tongue protrusions were ruled out on this basis. The unassailable logic of this kind of argument made the first credible report of neonatal imitation by Meltzoff and Moore in 1977 seem all the more dramatic. Meltzoff and his colleagues were able to film infants apparently copying tongue and lip protrusions, mouth openings, and finger movements at two weeks of age. The controls and analysis of the experiments were since refined (Meltzoff 1982) and, more recently, similar results were achieved with newborns, one of which was forty-two minutes old during the test (Meltzoff & Moore 1985).⁹

This work on early imitation can be brought to bear on the issue of representation and, indirectly, on the problem of object concept formation. The studies in question were carefully designed to evaluate the possibility that neonatal imitation is merely the product of conditioning or Innate Releasing Mechanisms. The conclusion of Meltzoff and Moore (1977) was to doubt the latter. They hypothesized instead that newborns must already be endowed with some capacity for

coordination of the senses. Though the infant hasn't seen its own face, it can map the facial gesture it sees the other make onto its own body and reproduce the gesture because it possesses a supramodal means of processing sensory input and translating it into proprioceptive and other sensual terms.

The idea that there is a common language of the senses was proposed as early as 1927 by Heinz Werner, who suggested that "physiognomic perception," a synaesthetic or 'syncretic' form of intermodal matching, was a prominent feature of primitive infantile experience (1948); but Werner did not try to link this theory to any capacity for object perception or representation in infancy, a possibility which he specifically rejected. Werner's (1934) approach was to interpret intersensory qualities as evidence for primary modal identity rather than for coordination, and he postulated an original developmental stage of total sensory undifferentiation. There have since been various speculations about coenaesthetic perception (Spitz 1965) and the possible synaesthetic equivalences of particular sounds, colours, shapes, textures, and moods; but the hypothesis of Meltzoff and Moore has a much more precise theoretical significance within the framework of contemporary developmental theory. Whereas the capacity for 'mental representation' has traditionally been viewed as the crowning achievement of pre-linguistic (sensorimotor) development, Meltzoff concludes instead that

sensory-motor behaviour is not 'internalized' to give birth to the infant's representation capacities at eighteen to twenty-four months of age. Quite the contrary. The ability to act on the basis of abstract representations or descriptions of perceptually absent events needs to be considered as the starting point of infant development, not its culmination (Meltzoff 1982, 109; cf. Meltzoff & Moore 1977, 78).

Arguments like this for what Butterworth (1982b, 140), echoing the phenomenological language of Merleau-Ponty, calls "a pre-reflective level of sensory and perceptual awareness" do not invalidate Piaget's careful descriptive work. But they do invite us to reconsider the explanations of what he saw, which flowed from his attempt to mediate the traditional rationalist-empiricist argument that bodily experience needs to be supplemented by conceptual models of space, time, causality, and the like, before coherent and meaningful perception can occur. The stage specific search errors isolated by Piaget can be accounted for on a quite different basis. If the infant already perceives things as bounded volumes persisting independently of sensory contact (object permanence)-- if we assume with Wishart and Bower (1984, 60) that the infant proceeds from "the simple recognition that an object is the same object at different times and in different places" -- then the errors of sensorimotor behaviour must derive in part from the fact that the neonate has very little specific experience of objects -- and not from a cognitive deficit alone. On this view, the problem for the child is not that it has yet to

construct a concept of the object adequate for perceiving the externality of things; rather, the child lacks a sufficiently rich information base for making reliable predictions, or pragmatic interpretations, of the object's behaviour.

The difficulties during these early stages of development will therefore be related also to the kind of generalization the child is making at the time, and not exclusively to the degree of generalization of which he or she is capable. This distinction allows for a more precise account of the fact that infant search errors are perseverative and stage-specific. If size, shape, and colour are less accidental features of a thing than position or trajectory, the infant's apparent failure to recognize this may very well be conditioned by too general a concept of permanence, rather than by the lack of such a concept. Object permanence is in fact an extremely abstract notion, and therefore potentially misleading, even for adults. It is well known that perfectly competent grown ups will repeat over and over again an unrewarding search pattern. Such behaviour involves a characteristic paradox, in which a growing sense of confusion and a temptation to withdraw are accompanied by the compulsive conviction that if only one looks in the obvious places again, the missing object will reappear. If the concept of object permanence is not denied to adults in this situation, there is no inherent reason why it should be denied to infants. Moreover, the

inconsistencies which arise during a child's attempts to act upon generalizations may lead to a corresponding reluctance to generalize in specific situations. This might explain the passive response of infants following their failures in situations defined as object retrieval tasks by the experimenting adult, a reaction which Piaget noted, but neglected to elucidate.

Faith in the continuing existence of things is not necessarily incompatible with the search errors which pre-linguistic infants make. The ability to perceive external objects in a coherent fashion and to conceive them in their sensory absence still leaves the human organism with the task of determining the most efficient strategies for motor success (in this case, finding things when they disappear from view) (Moore & Meltzoff 1978). The conceptual problem involved in this line of sensori-motor development may therefore be less a question of object permanence than a matter of determining the rules for correctly attributing object identity across the variety of object situations (Wishart & Bower 1984). In other words, the infant expects things to go on being the things that they are, but remains for some time confused about the way in which this intuition of continuity corresponds to experience, which is difficult to predict, and frustrating to try to act upon. (On the possibility that even a sophisticated concept of object identity is compatible with stage 4 and 5 errors, see Spelke [1985, 89-114]).

Piaget's developmental research contained an explicit programme for the reconciliation of the epistemological tradition. The theory of sensorimotor development is a bridge linking empiricism and rationalism: every child makes the passage from the atomistic chaos implied in the empiricist account of perception to the orderly significance and certainty suggested by rationalist theories of knowledge. Piaget assumed that in developing a functional object concept, the child must proceed from the particular to the general, from subjective immediacy to objective abstraction, and from body to mind. The problem of the object concept is thus, in a fundamental sense, paradigm-dependent. Apart from it there is no necessary reason to believe that the ability to perceive an object in space depends on having a correct theory about the behaviour of objects. The plausibility of such a view depends largely on philosophical outlook. If perception turns out to be something quite different from the traditional empiricist and rationalist accounts, then epistemological questions about when mental representations of objects are developed and how they can be validated as knowledge lose much of their interest, and perhaps even disappear (cf. Rorty 1979).

On a still grander scale of cognitive evolution, the spatio-temporal definition of objective reality against which Piaget measured the child's mental development hardly seems suitable as a scientific generalization. It is no longer at all clear that objects are solid enduring things

which do not change their characteristics in relation to time and space; and the Piagetian definition of space itself as a kind of neutral three dimensional container is even more questionable. There is no doubt that the sensorimotor schemes and conceptual structures that Piaget traces illuminate the functional coordination of the growing human organism to the physical environment. But little in such criteria is intrinsically relevant to the the question of the physiological development of perception. The irony of Piaget's work from an epistemological point of view may be that it has thrown so much light on the ecological parameters of cognitive adaptation at a time when the physical investigation and manipulation of nature may be destabilizing these parameters themselves, and perhaps even rendering them obsolete.

The appeal and influence of Piaget's structuralism lies mainly in the region of prevailing social scientific thought. The ideological framework of the cognitive model of development is congruent with an ancient system of oppositions which has always been fundamental to the philosophy of social being. For Piaget, as we have seen, life as a pre-societal infant begins as "chaos," and proceeds only gradually toward "cosmos" by virtue of representation, language, and social order. According to this view, the prehistory of the organism is blind, solipsistic, meaningless, and without boundaries. Sight, identity, objectivity and meaning are all thought to be

acquired by virtue of an order which is at best only latent in the physical organism, and which supposedly transcends the organismic level of being through the generality and abstraction of its systematic expressions in "mind" and "culture."

In this frame of reference, Piaget's discovery that children are easily confused about spatio-temporal relations has led to an enormous conceptual muddle in developmental psychology and social theory. The child's awkward attempts to find things are interpreted as efforts to reproduce them -- to conjure things up--- through the magic of gestures; and from this it is concluded that there is as yet no emotional awareness of the separate existence of objects. Thus, a technical difficulty in practical cognition, combined with a speculative theory of perception, becomes the foundation for a theory of emotional life based on the same model of development from primitive undifferentiation to social order. Perceptual deficits are inferred from levels of practical cognition (yielding solipsism) and brought to bear on emotional development (yielding narcissism), which in turn reacts upon moral development (yielding egocentrism). But, as we have begun to see, it is illegitimate to conclude from phenomena like the stage four place error that infant perception is solipsistic; or to infer from this apparent solipsism that the infant is emotionally incapable of grasping its dependence on the environment; or to decide on the basis of a postulated affective egocentrism that

children are morally selfish. It is one thing to determine the psychological imperfections of infancy, which are many and often persist throughout life; it is another to interpret them from the standpoint of a teleological idealization, in which the infant always turns out to be the negative of the adult. Perception is not likely to be a development out of nonperception, cognition a development out of indeterminacy, objectivity a development out of objectlessness, intentional action a development out of random motion, affect a development out of insensate drives, and morality a development out of immorality. There is no evidence to support such a mythological scheme of nature.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. According to Lashley and Russel (277), depth perception "is not dependent on experience or the building up of a system of motor habits, but is the immediate product of some coordinating mechanism elaborated by growth processes in the absence of visual stimulation adequate for learning."

2. On the philosophical import of Gibsonian theory, Alan Costall (1982, 31-2) remarks: "...James Gibson has been the first within the main stream of experimental psychology to have embarked upon a sustained and radical reformulation of the philosophical framework of perceptual theory. Unfortunately, his claim to have found psychological support for realism... has distracted attention away from the true value and unity of his work..., the identification of some of the conditions for a psychology of perception free of the rigid dualisms of traditional epistemology."

3. "The perception of everyday life is very often schematic. In common speech, [we tend] to 'see things in [our] own way.' In the course of practical behaviour, perception is no more literal with respect to color, size, shape, and sequence than is necessary, since literal perception takes time and effort. The percept is reduced to a cue for action. But perception can become literal whenever the observer needs to discriminate. Under favourable conditions it can be surprisingly exact.... Perception is not always or necessarily distorted by needs or affected by purposes. Misperception is not a consequence of sensory organizationIt is perfectly true that perception can be fluid, subjective, creative, and inexact, but it can also be literal....The student of human nature and society needs to remember this when he is in danger of assuming that men are the passive victims of their stereotypes and perceptual customs" (Gibson, 1950, 210-13).

4. 'Habituation' refers to the tendency to pay less attention to a stimulus once its novelty has worn off. Much of the evidence reviewed in this chapter on infant perception and cognition was obtained by establishing the infant's habituated response as a baseline against which to measure the reaction to variations in the stimulus. As noted in Chapter Seven, however, the habituation paradigm has proved misleading in the study of the infant memory (Rovee-Collier & Hayne 1987).

5. With regard to the controversy over whether depth perception is innate or learned, Piaget (1971), in this later work, seems to have retreated from his earlier constructivist position. "It is not certain whether three-dimensional vision is acquired or not...but the remarkable constancy in estimations of depth in terms of disparition

and the independence of these estimations with respect to age would seem to point to some innate mechanism" (270).

6.Cf. Chomsky (1981, 22): "The studies conducted by the Geneva school have been extremely illuminating, but the interactionist-constructivist model itself is difficult to assess, because it remains at the level of metaphor. Allegedly, the child progresses through a fairly regular sequence of cognitive stages, but no mechanism or principle is proposed to explain why the child moves from a given stage to the next rather than to some quite different stage. It is difficult to imagine what answer could be provided, apart from recourse to some assumption concerning maturation to a genetically determined target stage, at each point. And when such an assumption is made precise, it seems that it will express genetically determined aspects of human belief and knowledge that are far more intricate than the 'elementary hereditary forms' that the Geneva school is willing to contemplate."

7.The authors (Rovee-Collier and Lipsitt 1982, 180) continue: "This underestimation has resulted from the unquestioning commitment of researchers to the traditions of experimental physics and, in particular, to the Galilean refinement experiment. (As scientists we have regarded the control or elimination of all sources of experimental variation except the independent variable as a worthy methodological goal and have applauded those who have attained it.) These methods have to an extent compromised our conclusions and diminished the apparent behaviour and learning capabilities of the baby under study.... The attempt to gain precise experimental control has interfered in many instances with the very processes which researchers have sought to measure.... It is a credit to the flexibility of the newborn that we have been able to obtain so much evidence of learning." For some thought-provoking criticisms, along similar lines, of experimental method in adult cognitive psychology, see Oatley (1978, 146ff.): "If all we are doing in setting up a scientific laboratory task is to find out how people perform in that particular task, then there is little reason why people...should take any interest in any results which emerge. Indeed, if we encase the subject in such tight experimental confines as to constrain his actions entirely into some particular mode, then we run the risk not only of studying behaviour that is so unlike the normal as to tell us little of any general interest, but we also specify the nature of the results before the experiment is even done. And yet even this is unsuccessful because people are inventive, and there is usually more than one way of doing a particular task" (156).

8.According to Butterworth (1987, 70): "Far from independent locomotion giving rise to meaningful optic flow patterns, the infant appears to make use of the optic flow pattern as

a means of gaining control over the body in its succession of postures so that when locomotion does ensue, the infant will be assured of a degree of autonomous control. The implication is that the optic flow pattern is inherently informative about the relation between the infant and the world such that the absolute 'adualism' assumed by Piaget is not supported."

9. Meltzoff and Moore's results and conclusions are still considered by some to be "provocative" and controversial (Walker-Andrews 1988, 183).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SELF, THE DIVISIBILITY OF EXPERIENCE, AND MEMORY IN INFANCY

The self is not so much a substance as a process in which the conversation of gestures has been internalized within an organic form. This process does not exist for itself, but is simply a phase of the whole social organization of which the individual is a part. The organization of the social act has been imported into the organism and becomes then the mind of the individual. It still includes the attitudes of others, but now highly organized, so that they become what we call social attitudes rather than roles of separate individuals. This process of relating one's organism to the others in the interactions that are going on, in so far as it is imported into the conduct of the individual with the conversation of the 'I' and the 'me,' constitutes the self (Mead, 178-9).¹

The Self in Psychoanalytic Theory

So far, two possibilities have been established: in Chapter Five, that psychic activity cannot be explained entirely as a secondary development reducible to the motivational structure of need; and in Chapter Six, that complex psychological processes at the beginning of life cannot be ruled out on cognitive grounds alone. The upshot of these arguments is that it is at least possible that the human animal quite naturally starts out life by having objects to think about, and that the whole business of easing oneself into the world psychologically is immensely more complicated than getting enough milk and feeling comfortable. But this does not mean that physical survival

and the avoidance of pain are less important for humans than for other animals. On the contrary, having an object is likely to make these issues loom larger in psychological life. To be hungry is one thing; but to be oriented towards an object at the same time is an entirely different matter. The combination is psychologically explosive-- this, at least, is one way of restating Freud's original hypothesis about the nature of the psyche, and little in psychoanalysis has gone very far beyond his original surmise. The debate has been about when this explosion in psychological development occurs.

In the present day, the answer to that question hinges very much on how we interpret the infant's object-seeking behaviour. Is it largely nonspecific at the outset? And if so, when and how does it evolve into definite attachments to specific objects? Freud seems to have been of two minds on the question. On the one hand, he gave the infant a sort of psychic object: the hallucination of satisfaction, whose logic we have already explored. But as we have seen, he submerged his speculations about neonatal psychic imagery into a somewhat behaviouristic account of preverbal infancy, assimilating it to the notion of "primary narcissism," an all-encompassing state of the self without objects. The latter has become the generalized dogma of psychoanalytic theories of development; but it has never been made clear how such a state can evolve into a capacity to perceive and to think about objects. The most forthcoming answer has

been that frustration of the drive eventually forces the baby to think and to perceive-- in other words, that the pleasure principle gives way to the reality principle. We have explored some grounds for holding this explanation inadequate. In this chapter, we shall find more. We shall examine the whole idea of primary narcissism, and review the concepts of the self which have emerged from it. Here, as with the problem of objects discussed in the last chapter, neonatology will have a great deal to contribute. I shall argue that there can be no sense of self without a sense of objects, and that the concept of primary narcissism takes the experience of certain ego boundaries for granted-- boundaries which are in fact definitive of the perceptual (and to a lesser extent, the affective) differentiation between the self and the object world which the theory of primary narcissism sets out to deny. We are left with a choice: either symbolic processes are inseparable from human bodily functioning, which means that human bodies naturally function as localized pockets of awareness in relation to objects; or else human bodies are mired in "primary narcissism," and psychological life is a perpetual effort to escape this condition of the body by means of "representations" -- as Piaget suggested. If we adopt the latter alternative, then psychoanalytic developmental theory will be in danger of becoming a kind of rationalist microsociology, by retreating into the business of explaining how the environment "socializes" a self-enclosed

and oblivious body into symbolic competence (see Chapter Eight below).

During the heyday of psychoanalytic developmental psychology, D.W. Winnicott was probably the subtlest and most persuasive of the advocates for an environmental interpretation of infancy and of the emergence of symbolization. Like Bion, he is often perceived as having strayed from the Freudian camp, but in fact he was able to make a great deal of additional sense out of a number of Freud's key metapsychological assumptions, notably the theory of primary narcissism. Like Freud, Winnicott pictured the infant as a physiological system dominated by the pleasure principle-- the demand for drive satisfaction. For Winnicott's neonate, there is no (or at least, very little) ego to speak of; yet the same infant exists in a totally subjective, or "nothing but me" kind of world reminiscent of Piaget's egocentric, adualistic child who experiences sense impressions, even those of the mother, as its own creations, the "omnipotent" products of its own wishes and gestures. And like Freud, Winnicott (1965) sees the mastery of impulse as the main task of the ego, and the rise of the reality principle as a central theme of development. Thus, infancy "is essentially a period of ego development, and integration is the main feature of such development" (40). But like Hartmann and Bion in their different ways, Winnicott is much more specific than Freud about how this integration and development of the ego are

brought about. Whereas Freud had been satisfied with the general idea that frustration eventually prompts the child to take note of reality and to acknowledge its own dependence on an external world beyond its ultimate control, Winnicott takes this reasoning a step further by focussing on the part played by the mother in this process. As with Bion's 'reverie,' in which the mother, like a placenta, detoxifies the infant's projective identifications, Winnicott's "good enough" mother provides a "holding environment" in which fragmented states of distress, discomfort, pain, and need can be fed back as coherent and integrated experiences. The caretaker provides an auxiliary ego which supplements the infant's inchoate psychic organization. Consequently, the integration of the psyche can be represented as "the maternal ego implementing the infant ego and so making it powerful and stable" (41, *italics added*).

These formulations differ from Freud's in their increased emphasis on the active role of the environment in early psychological development. Freud's general view was that the infant eventually escapes the condition of primary narcissism because the environment fails to conform to its omnipotent wishes. The inevitable frustration repeatedly throws the infant back on itself, and gradually coerces it into differentiating its own impulses and drives, which it cannot escape, from the ministrations and forces of the external world, which it can learn to do something about.

Winnicott's point was that by itself, this scenario will not quite work. The environment must not only cause the frustration of the child's needs by default; it must also organize the infant's experience of frustration sufficiently so that the child can cope with it, and learn to tolerate the failure of its own omnipotence. Only thus can the child gradually accommodate itself to the existence of a reality external to itself. "The baby can meet the reality principle here and there, now and then, but not everywhere all at once" (1965, 57).

Freud did not entirely ignore the active function of the caretaker in the infant's psychological development. In fact, as Winnicott himself pointed out, he recognized that the state of primary narcissism would be impossible if the mother were not available to satisfy the infant's omnipotent wishes. As Freud (1911) put it:

It will be rightly objected that an organization which was a slave to the pleasure-principle and neglected the reality of the external world could not maintain itself for the shortest time, so that it could not have come into existence at all. The employment of a fiction like this is, however, justified when one considers that the infant-- provided one includes with it the care it receives from its mother-- does almost realize a psychical system of this kind (220, n.).

Winnicott makes a great deal out of this statement. His argument stresses that a "psychical system" such as Freud describes, in which the infant deals with frustration by fantasizing gratification, implies a functioning

perceptual apparatus and a relation to an object. In fact, it means (if the argument proffered in Chapter Five is allowed to stand) that the infant is already thinking in a highly realistic way about things that it has actually experienced and things that it actually wants; and this is not at all compatible with the concept of primary narcissism as it is generally understood. Primary narcissism, in Winnicott's view, requires us to imagine a situation in which the infant "lack[s] knowledge of the existence of anything other than the self" (49) and "has no means of knowing about the maternal care" (46). But Freud's description of the hungry baby's "hallucination" depends implicitly upon a specific correlation between a differentiated bodily state and a definite sensory experience, which is remembered in the form of an image. In other words, Freud's description of the first psychical system presupposes some measure of ego organization on the part of the baby, whereas primary narcissism by definition refers to a psychological state in which neither the term ego nor the term object has any application.

Winnicott's solution is to try to resolve this contradiction by foredating the whole episode of the hungry baby to a stage of development when the requisite ego apparatus is more likely to become available-- that is, subsequent to the phase of primary narcissism. According to Winnicott, the infant cannot do anything so precise as to experience the gratification of a need (let alone remember

it) until it has subsided from the condition of complete merger with the holding environment, during which the maternal or caring provision functions prophylactically to reduce to a minimum any impingement on the omnipotent self-system of the maximally dependent baby. If this holding phase of the infant-mother unit proceeds in a healthy way, then a basis is eventually established for the infant to experience its own hunger, and for the hungry baby to fantasize a feed, as Freud described. But once this state of affairs is established-- once the baby is able to react to its own bodily states (by localizing sensory experiences and drawing upon memory)-- then the specifically primary phase of narcissism is over, since an ego has begun to circumscribe events and "reference is being made to object relationships" (48). As Winnicott says,

It would be wrong to put the instinctual gratification (feeding, etc.) or object relationships (relation to the breast) before the matter of ego organization (i.e., infant ego reinforced by maternal ego). The basis for instinctual satisfaction and for object relationships is the handling and the general management and the care of the infant, which is only too easily taken for granted when all goes well (49).

In Winnicott's view, primary narcissism is really a state of "being," in an utterly passive sense of that term which existentialist thought would link to "bad faith" (or what Lacan calls the "Imaginary"), i.e., a self-deceptive unity or denial of the duality of en soi and pour soi--our lack of identity with ourselves (Sartre 1943). What is

interesting about Winnicott's handling of this concept is that he preserves the sense of there being an illusion without judging or condemning it; he even grants it a kind of ontological, or biopsychological status. Winnicott did not arrive at the idea of passive being by way of phenomenology, or ethics, but by teasing out and refining the paradox already present in Freud's metapsychological elaborations and apologies. Primary narcissism, or simple "being," in Winnicott's treatment, is an illusion-- but it is a biologically functional and psychologically necessary illusion. The symbiotic fusion of the baby with the holding environment translates the fictional dimension of theory construction to which Freud so often alluded into a factual dimension of human nature: it is built into the genetic programme as a requirement that an illusory sense of self-sufficient being be sustained by the environment. According to Winnicott, this narcissistic expectation can never be entirely relinquished; this is the philosophical supposition which underlies his theory of symbolization and culture, which we shall explore in greater depth in later chapters (see Arvanitakis 1979). And if the environment fails to sustain the illusion well enough during the critical primary phases of development, viable psychological development is imperilled. The essential form of being for the human organism thus involves a kind of space-time in which neither the possibility of action nor reaction exists except as a non-specific experience of catastrophe.

The alternative to being is reacting, and reacting interrupts being and annihilates. Being and annihilation are the two alternatives. The holding environment therefore has as its main function the reduction to a minimum of impingements to which the infant must react with resultant annihilation of personal being (47; cf.60).

For Winnicott, primary narcissism is the natural state of the human being in a much more complete sense than it ever was for Freud. Whereas for Freud, the infant's instinctual experience (which in fact implies an ego in the later, structural sense of the term) was the prime motor of development, for Winnicott the dynamic psychology of the libidinal and aggressive drives is a later development which depends upon successful passage through a phase of virtual innocence, in which ego, libido, and aggression are yet to be differentiated out of the primal mother-infant soup. This is why Winnicott believed that at the core of the human psyche there exists something called a "true self," and that at the most basic and simple level of psychic functioning, "instinctual satisfactions and object relationships themselves constitute a threat to the individual's personal going-on-being" (47). From this point of view, Freud's description of the hungry baby is not an account of the originary psychic situation, but rather a description of what happens after the fall from it, a fall in which the baby departs from the state of grace which constitutes successful primary narcissism, and begins to experience its body for the first time. Only at this point does the infant

enter into relationships with other bodies which actually differ from its own.

In some respects, Winnicott's account is similar to that of Hartmann and the ego psychologists (1946). In contradistinction to Freud's overall tendency to view the ego as the successor of the id, they proposed that both id and ego are developmental specifications of a more primitive, undifferentiated psychic matrix (in which neither instinct nor defence are operational in the sense traditionally defined by classical conflict psychology.) They further suggested that a prerequisite for the emergence of the ego and the id from this undifferentiated state "concerns the ability of the infant to distinguish between the self and the world around him." On this point, Willi Hoffer (1950, 18-19) speculated about the possible origins of the self-object distinction in the undifferentiated phase. He drew attention to the implications of "the perceptual experience when the infant touches his body. Here two sensations simultaneously yield an experience, and this may arise early in life, perhaps even in the intrauterine state.... Coming in touch with its own body...lead[s] to the distinction between the self and the not-self, between body and what subsequently becomes environment."

The 'self' was introduced by Hartmann (1950; D.C. Levin 1969) as a non-technical term for the whole of the subject's person in contrast to the object-environment, without reference to dynamic concepts or structural

differentiations. However the word has a tendency to undergo subtle shifts in meaning, as a result of its use in the discussion of the primary psychological matrix. Winnicott exploits this ambiguity by situating the true self in the context of the undifferentiated phase of development, thus introducing the idea of the self as the emotional centre of individual identity. This idea was further developed by Guntrip and others into a notion of the self as a kind of secret hiding place, or safe haven. The Winnicottian 'self' is not just an abstract, unifying term designating the totality of pre-individuated experience, although it is based on the premise that psychological life begins under such conditions. It has come to refer to a specific and vital part of the individual, a part which can be nurtured, repressed, split, concealed, gratified. This conception adumbrates the "self psychology" advocated by Kohut (1971, 1977), a psychology which interprets the self as the focus of a separate line of development, distinct from the drive-defence, conflict model of the psyche, and supraordinate to it.

The ego psychological view of primary narcissism and of the self has never gone quite this far. Rangell's (1982) reflections on the self spring from Hartmann's theory of delayed ego-id bifurcation out of an undifferentiated matrix, but he is careful to refrain from linking the self concept developmentally with the earlier state. Rangell views primary narcissism less as an all-encompassing stage

of development comprising the originary form of the self than as a necessary condition of human psychology in all phases of life (cf. Grunberger 1971). (In fact, Rangell implies that primary narcissism is really an inchoate form of what Freud had called the ego instincts [the self-preservative as opposed to the species-preservative, or sexual drives], treating narcissism in the clinical sense as secondary to the emergence of self-object relations.) Although Rangell is mainly concerned with Kohut's explicit challenge to the drive theory, his remarks also have a bearing on Winnicott's interpretation of the holding phase:

A symbiotic attachment by a dependent organism to a selfobject or, on a more diffuse and global and not yet completely animate scale, to the undifferentiated self and outer world, can hardly be thought of as a narcissistic investment of a however dimly conceptualized or affectively perceived self-organism. Narcissism cannot be said to be present when there is as yet neither libido nor a representation of a self with an ego (878).

Again, as in so many other attempts to resolve the problem of primary narcissism, there is a tacit acknowledgement that the concept is incoherent without some reference to ego-object or self-object relations. But since such relations are thought to be impossible during the first three to six months of life, and minimal during the subsequent year, the traditional notion of a primary narcissistic "stage" in which the baby is actively developing (through precise forms of experience and fantasy)

is replaced by the quasi-biological metaphor of a "symbiotic" state of being in which there is no awareness of self or other, no experience of the own body as distinct from the environment, and no differentiation of libidinal and aggressive drives. This is the position not only of Winnicott and the object relations theorists, but of leading developmentalists of the American school, such as Jacobson, Mahler, and Kernberg. The result is that Freud's intuition of an imaginary life emerging out of proprioceptive and perceptual experience (encapsulated in his model of the hungry baby's "hallucination" and in his theory of the drive as a demand upon the mind for work) tends to give way to a cognitive theory of mental representations, suggesting that awareness of being alive in the world is a sophisticated secondary construct, derived from a later-- and significantly more abstract-- form of psychic organization which is a variable of environmental input.

Difficulties in the psychoanalytic theory of narcissism are also revealed in the fact that the term is used not only to refer to the periodization of an originary psychosomatic state, but also to designate a specific type of fantasy which can be encountered during any phase of life. As Rangell points out, the clinical appearance of narcissistic states of mind is habitually and uncritically referred back to the earliest stage of development, and thus interpreted automatically as evidence of regression or traumatic fixation to an allegedly nonconflictual (and hence

nonexperiential?) period (as opposed to aspect) of psychological life (1982, 880). But if the existence of such a period is accepted, then the debate about the self concerns more than just the timing of what Margaret Mahler has called the "psychological birth of the human infant;" it is also about the character of psychological life itself. If psychological life begins with primary narcissism, then Freud's dynamic model of the mind must have been wrong, since conflict would then have to be seen, as Winnicott did, as a derivative characteristic of psychological being, relevant only to problems of later development. (This was the position consolidated by Heinz Kohut, to which Rangell refers.) On the other hand, if Freud was right about the conflictual nature of the psyche, then psychological life in the truly psychoanalytic sense must be tied to the subsequent separation and "differentiation" upon which mental "representations" allegedly depend. (This is the position which, in one form or another, the preponderance of ego psychologists have adopted.)² Yet which ever way we turn the matter around, the clinical construct of narcissism itself can only appear as an elaborate organization of thinking, never as the avatar of an exhaustive primary state (see Balint, 35-63).

In Chapter Five, we saw that as a psychological theorist Freud was both a monist and dualist. From time to time he held that mental life originates in some sort of undifferentiated unitary state of being; and he seems to

have stuck to the physicalist belief that in principle everything can be explained in terms of one set of propositions about material reality; but he also maintained the view that some sort of structural division was essential to scientific psychology. The latter conviction was expressed in a shifting pattern of dualities: drives and environment, the preservation of the species and the preservation of the self, sexual instincts and ego instincts, object libido and narcissistic libido, Eros and Thanatos, love and aggression. The internal inconsistency of the theory of primary narcissism expresses this tension in his developmental theory, and the model of the hungry baby is an excellent illustration of Freud's theoretical dilemma. The frustrated infant fantasizes the breast. Since this "hallucination" is defined as a regression to the memory of a perception, a differentiation in the psychological field is presupposed. The logical starting point for the hungry baby sequence is an experiencing "ego." Not only must the infant have a perceptual and cognitive experience of the object, it must have separated out its own bodily sensations sufficiently to allow the formation of an affective link between the experience of relief from hungry distress and the interpersonal experience of being fed. If there is an "omnipotent" defence against frustration based in a fantasy of exercising absolute control over the environmental provision through identity with the object which provides it, then its precondition is precisely the

differentiation of the object from the self whose absence the theory of primary narcissism is supposed to explain.

The various attempts to resolve the tension between a monistic primary phase of narcissism and the dualistic implications of the drive theory (essentially the argument that drives do not become operative until later in infancy) were explicitly rejected by Melanie Klein. Klein's approach was novel in several respects. She almost completely ignored the concept of developmental stages, and the problems of neurobiological and cognitive development as they were understood in her day, and concentrated instead on the logic of emotional growth. Emotional development as conceived by Klein is a struggle to master anxiety arising from aggression aimed at loved objects. Rudimentary forms of love and hate compete with one another from the beginning for control of the psyche. Klein followed Freud in arguing that the drives (originating in the libidinal instincts and the death instincts respectively) constitute the basic motivational system; but unlike Freud, and against all the official evidence of her day, she assumed that there is also some sort of functioning ego which is not simply a derivative of drive activity. This resulted in an entirely different view of "primary narcissism." For Klein, the primary process never operates all by itself, in the absence of perceptions, defences, and objects. There is always conflict for Klein--otherwise there is no psychic life-- and she attempted to demonstrate this by working up the implicit

heterogeneity of the hungry baby model into a dynamic picture of infantile psychic organization in which both primary and secondary processes are at work simultaneously. The contrast between her views and the standard conceptions of the narcissistic phase of development is stated explicitly in one of her later papers.

The hypothesis that a stage extending over several months precedes object-relations implies that-- except for the libido attached to the infant's body--impulses, phantasies, anxieties, and defences either are not present in him, or are not related to an object, that is to say, they would operate in vacuo. The analysis of very young children has taught me that there is no instinctual urge, no anxiety situation, no mental process which does not involve objects, external or internal; in other words, object-relations are the centre of emotional life. Furthermore, love and hatred, phantasies, anxieties, and defences are also operative from the beginning and are ab initio indivisibly linked with object-relations. (1975b, 52-3).

From the point of view of developmental theory, and quite apart from the clinical considerations which underly the psychoanalytic debates about infancy we have been reviewing, Klein's contribution was a fundamental one because it forcefully drew attention to the emotional complexity of object relations in early childhood, prior to the Oedipal phase, and more significantly, prior to the acquisition of language. There is now a general consensus that Klein was right to amend Freud in certain ways: to stress the psychological significance of the earliest relationship with the mother and/or supporting environment,

and to insist that the drive never operates exclusively in relation to the aim of discharge and satisfaction, but always in tandem with an ego which perceives the need-satisfying object and charges it with emotional significance.

The Psychobiological Basis for Self-Experience in Infancy

There have been a number of books in recent years exploring the interrelations between clinical psychoanalysis and contemporary neonatology (Lichtenberg 1983; Hamilton 1982). In one of the more ambitious of these works, Stern (1985) has attempted to bring the whole range of neonatological research to bear on the specific problem in psychoanalytic theory discussed above: the emergence of subjective identity or being, which, like Winnicott, Jacobson, and Kohut, Stern calls the "self." Like many contemporary psychologists specializing in early development, Stern links psychoanalytic theory with developmental psychology at the point where they agree that "human relatedness is present from birth." But he extensively revises established developmental models, discarding in particular the alternatives discussed above: that the self originates in a primary narcissistic state, or that the self or subjective identity is a late construct dependent on symbolic-representational capacities such as language, the "mirror-phase," and the like. We have already reviewed some of the cognitive evidence for doubting that

early psychic states are totally fusional, and that the infant is incapable of differentiating others from itself. To this, Stern adds important arguments about the nature of affect, and its relation to the organization of perception and memory. In Stern's view, the infant's harmonious experience of being with the other is a complex psychological achievement, with active contributions by both parties, rather than a "passive failure... of differentiation" on the part of the infant, as drive theory, object relations theory, and separation-individuation research usually contend (101).

Starting from a position similar to Kohut's (1977, 100-1) concept of a "virtual self," Stern sets out to trace the normal development of the infant through a succession of self-organizations: from an "emergent self" (0-2mos), through the "core" self (2-7mos.) and the "subjective" self (8-18mos), to the "sense of verbal self" which emerges during the Oedipal period. From the research on infant perception, Stern is able to extract an impressive catalogue of the experiential "invariants" (rhythms, sensations, perceptual constants, stable contrasts) which probably underly the sense of being a separate body in a larger extensional world. He expands on the implications of intermodal sensory coordination, perceptual discrimination, and object constancy cited in the previous chapter, and reviews the evidence for non-verbal memory (91) and for coherence and distinctness of self and object perceptions in

the middle trimesters of the first year. For example, he cites (87-88) Spieker's claim that the infant links the different emotional configurations of a familiar face, thus conserving the identity of significant others across changes in mood: the infant not only recognizes the mother's face, but perceives the invariants which persist throughout visual reconfiguration. At the same time, however, the infant is able to concentrate on identifying the affective expressions of people it has never seen before, thus demonstrating an ability not only to identify the particular other, but also the emotional state of any other (familiar or not), which suggests that the infant can focus attention selectively on the basis of familiarity (constant object) or perceived affect (the stranger is recognized as an other, and assumed to have moods, but not assumed to be as reliable as others who are known).

One of the implications of this research is that the infant infers that others have internal worlds, i.e., infants project their self-perceptions onto others. The infant perceives itself not only as a body in a world containing other bodies, but as a body with an experiential interior in a world where there are other bodies with internal worlds as well. As I shall attempt to demonstrate below, this is not just a dubious inference from experimental research. It is also a logical prerequisite for the clinical construct of 'symbiotic' states, at least when they take the form of projective identification. The

infant cannot possibly believe that it has expelled its less pleasant experiences unless it postulates an outside, attributing sentience and intentionality to some dimension other than itself.

The notion of self implies a more or less coherent experience of the body as a nexus of interactions, requiring both a sense of agency and of receptivity, which can be abstracted from the larger and more inclusive perceptual world. But if these preconditions for a rudimentary, differentiated self-experience are already present or emerging rapidly in the first two months of life, as Stern argues, this by no means rules out the possibility-- or minimizes the significance-- of the symbiotic, acognitive, undifferentiated, and unintegrated states of early infancy described by psychoanalytically oriented developmental theorists such as Winnicott and Mahler. Nor does it eliminate the role Freud and Klein believed to be played by drive frustration and defensive fantasy in the consolidation (if not creation ex nihilo) of cognitive boundaries and the formation of an internal psychic world. A plausible argument can be made that the contradictory range of concepts which have come to be associated with Freud's theory of primary narcissism (from states of fusional oneness with the object to disorientation of the body image, from dual unity to part objects, from the oceanic feeling and narcissistic bliss to panic and oblivion, and so on) reflects the existence of psychologically privileged

"moments" which shape development against the normal background of the "infant's day" (Pine 1981). To claim as many psychoanalysts do that it is a fact of psychology that the infant experiences itself as fused with the object-- and perhaps as "omnipotently" controlling it-- is not necessarily to say that the infant has failed to perceive the difference between its own body and the other's, or even that the infant is incapable of distinguishing its own feelings and wishes from the moods and intentions of the object. It is only to say that certain kinds of experience are typically crucial for psychological development. We know from ordinary observations of adult behaviour that discrete events, or particular emotional situations, will very often overdetermine the ordinary functioning of intact perceptual, cognitive and motor apparatuses. There is no reason to assume a priori that the same kind of complex outcome is impossible in infancy.

The potential for a reasonably factual but thoroughly inconclusive debate over the interpretation of the infant's boundary experiences is enormous. For example, the foetus is known to smile in the womb at eight months, in conjunction with Rapid Eye Movement sleep. R.E.M. sleep is generally taken to signify the dream state, and such smiling is described as endogenous smiling because it is apparently not related to any specific externally perceived stimulus. There is also an endogenous frown, which occurs in greater frequency in earliest infancy just before waking, during

R. M. sleep, when the infant is hungry (Plutchik, 319). Such findings recall Freud's proposition that primary experiences are connected with the pleasure and pain of bodily states, particularly hunger, and the wish-fulfilling fantasies of the dream state, which are interrupted by the pain of the still unsatisfied instinctual drive. Since the smile and the frown are considered to be "endogenous" at first, this suggests that the fundamental "affects" are related to a global and all-inclusive "self"-- an autistic or narcissistic state of being in which the "self" is aware of nothing but itself.

On the other hand, one can argue that the endogenous smiles and frowns imply that the self is already the territory of otherness, that both the smile and the frown involve an independent judgment of the physiological setting coextensive with self-experience, and therefore that even the global, narcissistic self is "divided from itself," and treats itself as an "external" environment within which it-- the self-- subsists.

Normally, developmental theories, both psychoanalytic and academic, assume that the boundary which arises from the attribution of interiority and exteriority is influenced by primary bodily experience, and this point of view is almost certainly correct. But there are many ways in which the distinction between self and other can emerge, in Winnicott's (1965, 60) phrase, through "the rudiments of an imaginative elaboration of pure body-functioning." As we

saw in Chapter Five, Freud yoked the inner-outer boundary to the difference between an aversive stimulus, which can be evaded through withdrawal, and the constant pressure of the drive. Willi Hoffer's image of the baby touching itself already shifts the problem away from the pleasure-pain axis to a more neutral kind of perceptual discrimination of body-self and environment. More recent research indicates that many of the cognitive components of the differentiation of the own body from the surrounding world of objects are unlearned. As soon as we talk about the "self," it becomes difficult to rule out the possibility that some kind of metaphorical boundary between what is 'intrinsic' or invariant to experience, and therefore "inside," and what is extrinsic, variable, and therefore "outside," arises before the visual mode of external perception of the body in the environment has occurred. Whatever the origin of the boundary, the boundary itself is always likely to be somewhat vague and malleable, especially during periods when there is a rapid flux of new information/experience. The term 'self' is, in other words, inherently slippery, and it is probably a credit to Freud that he avoided its use as a technical term.

Another point of view is provided by the phenomenon of infant crying. Although there are many different kinds of infant crying, they are interpreted generally by attachment theorists as a type of biologically programmed social signal. In this regard, they correspond to what Freud

(1895) described as a "specific action." When the baby is in a fussy mood, and cries, this constitutes a sort of quasi-intentional act, or proto-communication. The infant "wants" something, but this wanting is not entirely mechanical. If it were, the behaviour in question would correspond to a simple reflex response. The paradigm of reflex psychology predicts that crying behaviour ought to increase in the long run if it elicits a soothing response, and decrease if it does not, on the theory that holding and comforting a crying baby constitutes positive reinforcement of the behaviour which elicits it. From the point of view of social learning theory, therefore, crying would be maladaptive, which is surprising, since it is at first an unconditioned response-- not an "operant behaviour." According to attachment theorists like Ainsworth and Bell, however, the opposite is the case. The comforting reaction to crying diminishes the subsequent amount of crying, and more so the sooner it occurs. Moreover, in the view of these researchers, as the quantity of crying-- in a responsive environment-- diminishes following the first quarter, subtler forms of communication tend to take over, in contrast to infants with parents unresponsive to crying, whose crying apparently increases in the later months (Bell & Ainsworth, 1184-5). This way of interpreting the data suggests that the infant's experience of the pleasure-giving response-- the holding, rocking, and cooing-- is more complicated than a drive-gratification, or simple hedonic

state, to be sought addictively through repetition of the associated behaviour which elicited it.³

Bell and Ainsworth argue that what the infant seeks is not gratification as such, but interaction with the attachment figure. This formulation loosely conforms to the object-relations view that the "libido is primarily object-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking" (Fairbairn 1952, 82). "Attachment" is a much more complex and detailed state for an infant to be seeking (or avoiding or resisting) than pleasure (understood as reduction of tension). The latter, taken in the usual binary sense (pleasure versus pain), is really a generalized abstraction which conveys little psychological information. As Ainsworth (1969) argues, attachment and interaction cannot be understood without attributing more elaborate "internal structures" to the infant who elicits them. The infant's decreasing inclination to cry when soothed implies that the satisfying experience carries over into an attitude: that the infant internalizes some measure of the successful response to stress, which modifies the infant's way of handling stress later on. (Many psychoanalysts would restate this by saying that the mother supplies the auxiliary ego functions which the child will eventually internalize and make its own.)

If we also take into account what occurs when the baby is deprived of soothing contact, a complementary perspective emerges. The crying behaviour does not decrease, as would be expected by a strict behaviourist paradigm; but it

doesn't simply increase, as a diametrically opposed, but equally mechanical theory, might predict. Instead, the infant, perhaps after some initial groping to establish or reestablish contact, tends to diminish its active engagement with the environment, and appears, over time, to generalize the repeated experience of unanswered or inadequately handled stress into a stable expectation about the world. The infant tends to withdraw when its interactional needs are not met, or when it perceives some discrepancy in the behaviour of the nurturing object (e.g., an experimentally induced mismatch between a voice and a familiar face).

The attachment theorists' account of the infant's interrelation with the environment at the beginning of the developmental journey is an outgrowth of the various adaptational models that were proposed since the 1930's by Hartmann, Spitz, Bowlby, Winnicott, and others. It implies an innate psychobiological organization which equips the baby with expectations and a capacity to interact. This framework is irreducible to the reflex arc model of behaviour, whether conceived in terms of conditioning or of drive discharge. As Ainsworth contends, attachment behaviour is more than simply a given biological foundation from which the mechanisms of conventional social learning theory and operant conditioning proceed (Ainsworth 1969, 992ff.) The adaptational models focus on regulatory mechanisms and patterns of equilibrium or disequilibrium in the relations between the baby and the "facilitating

environment." In cybernetic terms, caretaker-infant communication is conceived as a complex arrangement of feedback loops, controls, and monitoring systems, many of which are located inside the baby. Attachment research suggests that some sort of equifinal state emerges from early interactions which involves a more complex system of variables than conditioning and need gratification will account for. The "system" in question is an interpersonal one, and the idea that steady states arise from it is based on the assumption that the internal processes of the infant are regulated through interaction with the environment, and that these social relations in infancy contribute, if they are harmonious, to a stable sense of "self," in other words, to a psychic world which eventually becomes capable of maintaining its own balance independently of the environment, while remaining in tune with it.

This way of understanding the initial conditions of human psychology points to another ambiguity of the concept of self. On the one hand, the 'self' is tied to the way that a number of variables optimally come together: the self is a product of more or less social conditions-- confined within certain biological parameters, but nevertheless interpersonal in origin (like linguistic competence). On the other hand, if these factors, which presumably include a constitutional element, actually fail to come together in the right way, nobody says that the developmental result is a total absence of self, or an absolute failure to form any

sense of being or having a self at all. With the exception of severe cases, such as the acute hospitalism or marasmus which Spitz (1965) described, the literature refers only to a damaged or pathological sense of self, to deficiencies and arrests of development rather than to an absence of self as such (even in cases of child psychosis).⁴ There is always something self-like left over from the accounts of developmental catastrophe, something which implies the existence of an ongoing psychic process which the subject experiences, in spite of the traumas and "derailments," as being its own process, if only in the sense that this process is not necessarily felt to be located anywhere else. Even full blown paranoia requires a minimal differentiation between the self and the environmental setting onto which the internal world is projected. Some residual sense of self seems to survive and persist through every failure of actual living to conform to the optimal systems model of infant caretaking, or deviation from 'functionally adaptive patterns of behaviour.'

Research into the pathognomonic effects of separation, loss, neglect, and maltreatment in infancy (pioneered by Spitz and Bowlby in the 1940's) has produced striking results, not least of which is the impression that human infants are surprisingly resilient. Nevertheless, the sensitivity of infants in the first months to interactive rhythms with other humans is remarkable. In attempting to establish the normative parameters of "early mother-infant

reciprocity," Brazelton and his colleagues (1975) introduced experimental distortions in the interchanges, such as getting the mother to immobilize her facial expression for minutes at a time. This procedure thwarts the infant's attempts to achieve affective synchrony with the other. The subject repeatedly scans the mother's face and eyes, and gradually withdraws into a temporarily "utterly helpless and hopeless" state (145). One neonate, with a congenitally blind mother whose characteristic facial expression was mask-like, took several months to adapt to the mother's aural and tactile modes of communication, but maintained the usual dimension of visual and facial interaction with sighted adults. According to Brazelton, "normal [parent-infant] interaction...is a mutually regulated system in which both partners modify their actions in response to the feedback provided by their partner" (147). In his view, the infant's contribution is an intentional one, and "it is surprising how early the infant plays an active role" (147). In support of this, Brazelton points out that the infant's engagements with inanimate objects follow a different pattern from interactions with humans. At two weeks, the infant's attention to the object is characterized by periods of intense scrutiny, followed by an abrupt turning away. With people, however, the infant joins in a repeated cycle of smooth and rythmical interactions involving a build up of excitement, then deceleration, from initiation to greeting, climax, and gradual disengagement.⁵

The precision of the infant's sensory and emotional responsiveness suggests the possibility that the influence of the environment on the infant's psychological disposition may be subtler than previously believed. With the notable exception of the Kleinians, the conventional psychoanalytic and psychiatric view was for a long time that certain difficulties such as depression, which have a very complex aetiology, simply could not occur in early childhood, since psychological structure is still relatively simple and undeveloped at this age (for example, it was believed that the pre-Oedipal child lacks a "superego," and therefore any mechanism for introjecting aggression.) This picture has long since been revised. Even castration anxiety and penis envy have been observed in children less than two years old (Roisin & Galenson 1981). Infants can get severely depressed when they lose a parent, develop elaborate conflicts and symptomatology around separation, and generally demonstrate a great deal of emotional vulnerability from the very beginning. Whether they suffer depressive illness in the clinical sense is open to debate (Cicchetti & Aber 1986). Some researchers claim that certain distorted patterns of interaction (for example, a mother who consistently avoids eye contact) are predictive of childhood psychosis and autistic reactions (Massie 1982). This kind of work is based on the systems view that the infant's dispositions are "structured" by "the cumulative iteration of the exchanges experienced" (Tronick 1982, 3),

or what Brazelton terms "the powerful shaping of the communicative envelope of reciprocity" (Tronick 1982, 8). According to some longitudinal studies, however, children are more likely to show signs of vulnerability to parental psychopathology during the second year (Cicchetti & Aber, 101-103). It is unclear whether this means that they are less affected during the first twelve months, that the signs of psychological difficulty are more difficult to read during this period, or that the effects of cumulative trauma (Khan 1963) during one phase of development require reinforcement during the next in order to take root and become chronic. But the studies do "suggest that the search for early precursors to later depressive phenomena must be founded upon a refined understanding of the interpersonal matrix for early social, behavioral, and affective development" (Cicchetti & Aber, 107).

In order to grasp the challenge which neonatology poses for clinically-derived developmental theory, a brief digression on the psychoanalytic contributions of Otto Kernberg will be useful. Kernberg's work is a representative synthesis of several developmental schools: Kleinian theory, the work of Hartmann, Jacobson and Mahler, Piaget, and object-relations theory. Kernberg attempts to integrate the phenomenon of early splitting, such as Klein describes, together with her account of paranoid and depressive anxieties, into a systematic ego-psychological account of developing object relations, without sacrificing

the perspective of drive psychology (libido and aggression). In fact, Kernberg's inspiration goes all the way back to Freud's first published metapsychological essay in The Interpretation of Dreams. As we have seen, it is typical of psychoanalytic theorizing about psychological origins to try to build up a picture of the internal world from an atomic unit or nuclear element of the primal psychic state. For Freud, the basic building block was the pain principle, or more precisely, the experience of unpleasure, and the attempt to avoid it, which gradually mutated into the "reality principle," the ability to calculate, the capacity for accurate exteroceptive perception, and tolerance of delayed gratification (discharge).

The primary model of thinking in psychoanalysis states in part that all events (presumably all sense impressions and associated motor actions) that are temporally related to conditions of heightened drive tension and tension reduction are registered in memory as belonging together. Under a drive organization of memories all instances of satisfaction related to one drive are experienced as equivalent representations of that drive. Their 'meaning' and value are determined by the biological coordination between the drive tension and objects that can bring relief from tension." (Wolff 1967, 306-7).

Klein, Jacobson, Mahler, and Kernberg, using analogous assumptions about the interaction between drive and defense, propose that the nuclear element out of which psychic life emerges is the division of all experience into the categories or representations (or, for Klein, fantasies) of

pleasurable and unpleasurable experience, which generate the polarized "good" and "bad" versions of the self and the object. In Kernberg's (1976) view, these self and object "representations" are fused together as undifferentiated conglomerations of global narcissistic experience, organized according to the criterion of whether they are pleasant or unpleasant, without reference to any situational context or distinction between what the self does and what the object does. The common assumptions underlying this type of developmental reasoning are stated convincingly by Margaret Mahler, whose formulations are clearly designed for integration with Piaget's timetable for cognitive development:

We know that the infant can already respond differentially to stimuli from inside and outside.... But, unless we postulate inborn ideas, it seems most reasonable to assume that the child has no concept, no schema, of self and other to which to attribute and assimilate these differing stimuli. We postulate that experience of inside and outside is as yet vague... the mother is still a "part-object." [Mahler] hypothesizes that images of the love object, as well as images of the bodily and later the psychic self, emerge from the ever-increasing memory traces of pleasurable ("good") and unpleasurable ("bad") instinctual, emotional experiences, and the perceptions with which they become associated (Mahler et al. 1975, 49).

According to Kernberg, if the infant's fusional experience with the object is a favourable one, these dichotomous amalgamations are gradually separated out into self and object representations, issuing in both good and

bad versions of each. Finally, with the approach of the Oedipal period, ambivalence is tolerated to the extent that the dichotomized representations can be combined, so that a more realistic and separate "whole" self (good and bad) and whole object (good and bad) emerge from the part-object experiences and split perceptions of infancy.

The problems with this sort of account are several. As Stern (1985) points out, the use of such streamlined reconstructions of early development in the formulation of general psychological theory (and by extension, in the theory of symbolization) can be extremely misleading. To begin with, Kernberg's dialectic of good and bad, based on the pain principle, presupposes a dichotomization of experience from the beginning: that is, the infant either feels that an experience is wholly good or else it is wholly bad, and radically separates them in such a way as to experience nothing in between. But there is much evidence to suggest the contrary: that hedonic tone is experienced in infancy as a continuum, and that the problem for clinical theory is to account for the action of splitting itself, rather than to posit splitting as the originary form of affective organization. One could go into more detail on this point, citing the range of affect which everyone has observed in the very small infant, the many grades of pleasurable expression, from sleepy contentment to elation, the different qualities of crying, from mopiness to rage, and the gradations of cognitive affect, extending from

expressions of mild interest to intense curiosity and utter surprise.⁶

Another problem with the good-versus-bad account of early psychodynamics is that while it assumes a radically polarized organization of the earliest affect as a natural given, it also presupposes an absolute continuity between the "subject" and the "object." Thus, while the infant is supposed to perceive the difference between good and bad, it fails to notice any boundary between itself and the object. As we have already seen, the logical consistency of such an account depends upon the assumption that infant perception is exclusively affective and enteroceptive (as Spitz and Mahler hypothesized)-- an assumption which is no longer tenable.

The objection to be made here is not to the fact that the infant's point of view is conceived in psychoanalytic theory as preponderantly self-centered; preoccupation with one's own feelings and needs does not necessarily imply a constitutional inability to differentiate objects in infancy, any more than it does in adulthood (see Chapters Eight and Nine). The problem with the psychoanalytic account is simply that there is no reason to believe that the infant is better (or worse) at organizing its perception of internal states into polarized opposites ("good" and "bad") than it is at organizing its external perceptions into "me" and "not me." The infant already has a differentiated but coordinated sensorium, a variegated

repertoire of affective response, and a capacity to process information. If the infant can recognize its mother (including her face and her characteristic bodily configuration as it coheres in movement), it can probably contextualize a grade of its own feeling, even if it may for other reasons choose to do otherwise. As Stern argues, the basic clinical concept of motivation "will have to be reconceptualized in terms of many discrete but interrelated motivational systems such as attachment, competence-mastery, curiosity, and others. It is of no help to imagine that all of these are derivatives of a single unitary motivational system" (238). In other words, there is no reason to assume, as did Freud and Piaget, that cognitive processes are an outgrowth of undifferentiated or only crudely differentiated affective states. According to Stern, "the evidence weighs far more on the side of a simultaneous dialectic between a pleasure principle and a reality principle, an id and an ego, all operating from the beginning of life" (239). As we have already seen, the infant is not simply a machine for defending against internal unpleasure, as psychoanalysis (from Freud to Bion) has generally assumed when it ventures into the region of metapsychology.

Nevertheless, Stern's point is easily misunderstood, and Stern himself seems on occasion to overstate his case. Clinical psychoanalysis and cultural anthropology have long established beyond serious doubt the ubiquity of the

splitting process, as well as the tendency to project the "bad" away from the self and the social group. There is also strong reason to accept a basic clinical division of affect orientation ("motivation") into love and hate (libido and aggression), as did Klein, Hartmann, Jacobson, and many others before Kernberg. What is being overlooked in many of the metapsychological accounts, and to some extent by Stern as well, is the possibility that splitting is an active symbolic process which takes hold of experience and moulds it, rather than simply rising from it inductively, as Mahler and Kernberg suggest. The infant's capacity to split does not necessarily entail the assumption that all neonatal perception and emotion is limited to polarized valences at the extremes of the pleasure-pain axis. On the contrary, it can be interpreted to mean that the neonate is endowed with an impressive (and perhaps dangerous) ability to reorganize its attitude to the world on the basis of cognitive abstractions of bodily experience. It is no mean feat to divide up experience into good and bad on the basis of a fluctuating and ambiguous interaction with the environment. If the baby is doing this, it may just as plausibly be taken as a sign that infants are cursed with intelligence, as that they are blessed with ignorance.

Stern seems to attribute the overemphasis to be found in Freud and Klein on drive-defence conflict in the first year of life to the bias of an exclusively clinical orientation to development. Stern's own bias seems to be in

favour of the innocence of the child. Although he does not accept the concept of a primary undifferentiated phase of development, or of primary narcissism, he nevertheless aligns himself with the environmentalist view that conflict and aggression are induced phenomena of the second year. But the evidence that Stern marshalls against primary narcissism should increase rather than diminish our respect for the motivating power of pleasure, pain, and anxiety. To demonstrate a capacity for intelligent perceptual discrimination and sensitively attuned affective response in early infancy is to supply the supporting psychobiological evidence, which Freud lacked, for his speculations about infant psychodynamics. The infant relates its own experiences to objects, and thinks about these relationships. It feels, wants, hopes, fears, and knows. The only question is whether the role of pain, frustration, aggression, and conflict is as central and exclusive in infancy as some psychoanalysts claim. The arguments of Stern and Lichtenberg make it clear that Freud and Klein were highlighting only one aspect of a complex picture. But the latter were right in thinking that the baby can tell the difference between what it wants and what it doesn't like, and that infants have enough mental equipment to make it plausible that, at least on occasion, they might indeed think themselves into emotional predicaments, and imagine all sorts of consequences and solutions. It would only be in the absence of functioning sensory, affective, and

cognitive systems during the first year of life that one would be justified in ruling out, *apriori*, the hungry baby scenario, or denying the emotional significance of frustration, or dismissing the possibility of splitting, projection, and identification as means of coping with difficulties in the first year of life.

This brings us to the concept of the internal world, which is usually treated as a social construct, determined in later infancy by an accumulation of imposed experiences and passively received psychic contents. If, as Stern argues and the evidence reviewed in the previous chapter suggests, the infant is able to experience itself as a distinct body in space, then the assumption that interiority is a secondary development is debatable. Differentiation of self and environment, however rudimentary and evanescent, certainly increases the likelihood that the infant will, as Freud surmised, register a discontinuity between what it feels to be going on "inside" the body-self, and what it is able to perceive going on in the environment. If cognition during the first six months is as sophisticated as current research suggests, then the discrepancy between inside and outside will be an issue for the child from very early on (one assumes a complicated and often stressful one, both cognitively and emotionally).

It is not clear why Stern avoids speculating about the possibility that there is some rudimentary neonatal elaboration of the concepts of "inside" and "outside," since

the latter are inevitable symbolic correlates (arguably, also prerequisites) of the experiential states he attributes to the infant in the first seven months of life. In Stern's account, the infant encounters its body as a kind of "self." Implicit in this is the notion that the infant body feels like an active interior in a world which is "outside," where there are other bodies, some of which behave as if they also have active insides (they are capable of locomotion, they express recognizable emotions, they smell and feel a certain way, they interact), and some of which do not (they are inert, they do not have faces, they do not have skin, they do not interact). The fact that the infant is observed to experience a richer repertoire of feeling and perception than the clinical concept of splitting alone would predict hardly requires us to believe that "good" and "bad" arise only later in the developmental timetable, concomitantly with language (and the abstract representational capacities which are usually assumed to derive from language, or from the neurological maturation which underlies it).

The argument might then run like this: laboratory research suggests that narcissistic and symbiotic states are not primary and global "stages" of development, but important secondary elaborations, or else theoretically overdetermined misreadings of normal internal transformations of self-experience during interaction with a libidinally privileged other (cf. Stern 1985, 100-123). Since the infant perceives the difference between its own

body and the other's body, it encounters itself as an invariant contrast with the spatial arrangement of the object world: it experiences what language labels an "inside," and probably gets round to inferring the other's internal world fairly quickly. If this is granted, then the stage is set for division and multiplication (splitting, projection, identification) of experience, since the infant will inevitably want to experiment with the possibility of "getting rid" of some of its feelings, and "hording" others. The infant may try pretending that what it feels is actually what the mother feels, and vice versa; or worry that the mother is not the "real" mother that it remembers and keeps inside; or it may suspect that the mother has forgotten that it is the "real" infant that she remembers having been with her; in which case the infant may very well wonder if it has forgotten itself, or forgotten the mother, and consequently speculate that there are two selves, two mothers, or more, or that the self it can tolerate and the mother who pleases are really the same being, and so on. The possible variations are numerous, and many of them imply confusing the self with the object, as well as splitting and "projective identification." Some of them will turn out to conform to a wish or appear to solve a vexing problem (temporarily reduce anxiety), in which case they may become habitual techniques of organizing experience. But even the "symbiotic" forms of thinking would be impossible if the infant had not already differentiated itself from the object

at some level.

In short, the emergence of the self, which Stern dates at around two months, implies the elaboration of an internal world, which in turn implies the "defense mechanisms" (which non-Kleinians usually foredate to the second year). Moreover, the so called defense mechanisms no longer appear as a priori configurations of affective experience. They are certainly organizations of feeling, and thus permutations of the psychic process, but they also have the character of hypotheses-- they are cognitive as well as affective, and thus represent an important sphere of commonality between these academically separated lines of developmental psychology. Once the primary narcissism hypothesis is eliminated, it is no longer so easy to dismiss psychoanalysis on the grounds that "psychic reality" is at best a secondary cultural phenomenon; and it is no longer so easy to ignore academic psychology on the grounds that perception and cognition are just the slaves of psychic reality, as theorists like Bion and Money-Kyrle (1968) sometimes appear to maintain.

The crucial point of contention here, apart from the issue of early emotions and the perceptual discrimination of otherness, is the nature and extent of infant memory. If the infant can only remember the mother and the quality of interactions with her when she actually appears (recognition), there is no strong basis for talking about the "internalization of the object," which G.H. Mead long

ago demonstrated to be essential for even a behaviouristic conception of social interaction. As Stern points out, internalization requires that "the lived episode of being with the other must be recalled when the other is no longer present" (116). If neonates are not capable of recall memory of any sort, then the "adaptive" process described above remains largely a physiological one, a quasi-symbiosis, with no significant psychological component, until at least eight months or perhaps even a year and a half, depending on when the theorist considers the advent of "mental representations" to occur. (Eight months is often cited as the critical period because it is associated with "stranger anxiety," which Spitz (1965) thought was the first index of object differentiation. In addition, of course, eight months marks the preliminary stages of object constancy in Piaget's timetable. A year and a half is the traditional date for the emergence of "representation," or symbolization, in the linguistic, or "semiotic" sense [Blum 1978; Lichtenberg 1987].)

We have already reviewed some of the evidence concerning the infant's capacity to maintain the memory of an object when it is out of sight. Recognition memory seems indisputable (the infant identifies and prefers the familiar caretaker), and short term memory, as in the case of Meltzoff's research on imitation, appears to be reasonably good in the early months. There is no doubt that memories are "stored," but there is some question about how they are

stored and the conditions under which they can be "mobilized." Stern argues that there is good evidence for cued recall memory, as Freud originally surmised. The baby gets hungry, and this stimulates some image of the associated feeding experience. The same would appear to be true of the fussy baby who is simply feeling lonely, or insecure, and wants to be held. Infant recall memory would not, of course, be based on the cognitively more elaborate and layered linguistic means of coding information, which is one reason why there has been so much skepticism about early memories until recently. Rovee-Collier and Haynes (1987) argue that most theories of infant memory are based on an adult model which implicitly equates the development of memory with language development (232). Using the classical learning paradigm, Rovee-Collier and her associates demonstrate convincingly that memory conservation in infancy has been vastly underestimated. They show that conservative estimates reflect the bias of visual attention and habituation studies, which would normally be used only for direct measurement of short-term memory in primates and human adults. Such studies assume that infants lose interest in a stimulus to the extent that they retain an engram or mental representation of it; from this it is inferred that renewed interest in an object is an indication that the infant has forgotten ever having seen it. This approach, which equates recognition with indifference, makes no sense in the study of retentive memory. Rovee-Collier

proposed instead that memory can be latent, and that its primary biological function is a prospective one-- to guide future action. The new orientation places the emphasis on the conditions under which memory may be reactivated, rather than on the simple absence of memory related behaviour in the present. Forgetting is interpreted as "a retrieval failure rather than as a storage deficit" (203). In a detailed series of experiments, varied over a number of years, the researchers were able to reactivate infants' memories of situations learned weeks and months before, when the subjects were two months old. They concluded that "the mechanisms that mediate long-term memory are functional at birth and even earlier" (191).

There is also good evidence for long term motor recall memory in infants at three months (Rovee-Collier & Lipsitt). Long term perceptual memory has been demonstrated even earlier, as has affective memory. In addition to this, anecdotal evidence of birth memories can be very impressive, as in the case of the three-year old girl who was relieved of congenital nightmares when she was able to relate her dream, which uncannily symbolized the traumatic circumstances of her birth (Scott 1975, 287-8). Stern (1985, 91-99) has tried to integrate the various modes of nonverbal recall into a theory of episodic memory, which would be organized into what he describes as "generalized event structures" and "representations of interactions which have been generalized (RIGs)" (see Chapter Ten below). This

approach echoes that of Newson (1979, 214), who argues that the function of early social interaction is "to break up the ongoing stream of disordered experience into temporal chunks with defined beginning and end points, and into event sequences to which meaning can be attached." In line with the evidence reported more recently by Rovee-Collier and Hayne, Stern proposes that "whenever an infant encounters one part or attribute of a lived episode, the other attributes of the generalized episode (RIG) will be called to mind. Various evoked companions will be almost constant companions in everyday life..."

...the infant's life is so thoroughly social that most of the things the infant does, feels, and perceives occur in different kinds of relationships. An evoked companion or internal representation or working model or fantasied union with mother is no more or less than the history of specific kinds of relationships... or the prototypic memory of many specific ways of being with mother... Once cued recall memory has begun to function, subjective experiences are largely social, regardless of whether we are alone or not. In fact, because of memory we are rarely alone, even (perhaps especially) during the first half-year of life. The infant engages with real external partners some of the time and with evoked companions almost all the time. Development requires a constant, usually silent, dialogue between the two (118).

Stern describes the infant's emerging, social, self-other sense of being in the world as "core-relatedness;" Trevarthen (1979), another important infant observer who has done work on crying, recognition, and mother-infant

interaction, calls it "primary intersubjectivity." Both researchers view this very early, and essentially somatic type of interactive experience as the basis of social-psychological development. According to Stern, core-relatedness is "the existential bedrock of interpersonal relations" (125). Like Trevarthen, Newson speaks of the infant as "biologically tuned to react to person-mediated events, and argues that "within weeks...perhaps...days... after birth, [the infant] is embarked upon the neverending programme of social inter-communication with other self-conscious... communicating human beings" (207-8). But in all these accounts, what is described as social is at least partly internal. The "evoked companions" to which Stern refers may correspond in part to "internal objects," and his theory of the sociality of subjective experience has features which suggest something very similiar to the psychoanalytic concept of internal object relations (see Chapter Ten).

One of the problems with the model of infant "social communications" which has emerged from the attachment research of Bowlby and Ainsworth is that it is embedded in a framework of ethological theory which is unwieldy and occasionally misleading. Like ego psychology, attachment theory is willing to grant the infant an 'internal structure,' but is reluctant to follow through with an effort to conceptualize the dynamic of the infant's internal world. The latter, of course, is largely avoided on

methodological grounds. Attachment theorists assert, with ample reason, that the infant is "programmed" to "emit" certain proximity-inducing behaviours, such as crying, but then proceed to confuse the evolutionary-biological foundations of behaviour with its psychological meaning. Infants probably cry quite frequently simply as a form of expressive discharge, sometimes as a way of being frightened, sad, or angry. Winnicott refers somewhere to the infant's need to exercise its lungs. Neonatal crying is undoubtedly an adaptive behaviour in the broad sense, but the attachment theorists go further than this, suggesting not only that it is a "fixed-action pattern" (Bell & Ainsworth 1972, 1108) designed to maximize survival, but that the infant's propensity to stop crying when the mother approaches is also due to natural selection, "since a vocal signal might also attract a predator" (1186). It seems unlikely that infants are "programmed" to produce such specific behavioural responses, and if they were, we would expect these responses to be more consistent. In fact, infants very often don't stop crying when they are picked up. Presumably the cessation of crying is contingent on a variety of factors, and so the infant probably exercises some judgment, however primitive, about the situation it is in. The infant stops crying when it feels better, and that may depend upon whether it believes that genuine contact with an object has been established, whether it trusts the object, or whether it is too angry with the object to stop.

If infants cry in order to get their parents' attention (signal), perhaps they will sometimes cry even more in order to punish them when they get the attention (complex communication or 'message'). Such an interpretation is not inconsistent with the specifics of attachment theory. Indeed, it fits rather well with Ainsworth's contention that infant crying tends to increase over the first year in an unresponsive environment. Even if the initial manifestations of crying behaviour are innately triggered responses, the more plausible evolutionary interpretation, as Lamb et al. (1985) speculate, would be that "natural selection could have equipped each normal human infant with a set of different behavioral strategies from which one can be selected depending on the specific physical and social environment encountered" (53).⁷

In most of the accounts reviewed in this chapter, communicative interaction in early infancy is considered to be fundamental; there is even a tendency to view it as something which takes place for its own sake. While there is a general tendency to treat "the affective system as the primary means of regulating joint exchanges" (Tronick 1982, 1), on the whole, infant researchers working outside the classical learning/drive-reduction paradigms are not inclined to explain early proto-social behaviour in terms of one motivational system, such as primary affects, or hunger; or to see the experiential situation of infancy as dominated by any one mode of physical interaction, whether it has to

do with cognition, emotion, activity, sensation, or perception. Quantities of excitation and arousal, levels of tension and conflict, and types of hedonic tone and external stimulus are all considered significant, but none is universally privileged as an "organizer" of infant experience. All are present to some degree at all times.⁸

To interpret this picture of the infant as an homunculus, or scaled down adult, would be a misunderstanding; but the revised accounts of early childhood we have been reviewing do suggest that a great majority of the essential human traits are present and active in rudimentary form during the first year, including the capacity to symbolize experience, even vocally, though not linguistically. There is an additional consideration. It would appear that "intersubjectivity," as Trevarthen calls it, is not just an obscure conundrum for philosophers and social theorists to ponder and wrestle with, but a native "function" of the human body (Trevarthen & Hubley, 213). And this possibility is supplemented by yet another. Implicit in the new material on infant perception, affect, cognition, and the studies of attachment and interaction-- and explicit in the writings of a handful-- is the idea that the human infant commences post-natal life in awareness of the paradox of physical separation; and that contrary to the emphasis of normal psychological science, one of the chief developmental tasks of the infant is to achieve, and learn to sustain-- not just "separation" and "differentiation,"

which are difficult enough, but also states of psychosomatic fusion with individual members of "society."⁹

In a more general way, what is new about these accounts derived from experimental research is that they treat the reconstruction of the internal world as indispensable to an understanding of observed social behaviour, and that they view the internal process as a constant interaction between stored experience and current experience, taking place on many levels. Such was of course the perspective which Freud introduced to the study of symbolic process in 1900; but its reemergence within the very different context of observational social psychology has sharpened the contours of Freud's essential contribution, and heightened our awareness of the difficulties which face social thought in the future.

The possibility that very small infants can "listen in" on the adult world perceptually is faintly disturbing to many, and the notion that children may begin to think about the world they perceive is especially unpalatable if it implies that suffering is a significant factor at an extremely tender age. The sometimes heartrending screams of the hungry baby, or the baby who feels abandoned in its hour of need, provoke disquieting identificatory feelings in adults, and it is comforting to believe that in the first months of life we exist only as insensate physiological functions, or at worst, in a "state of primitive hallucinatory disorientation," as Mahler puts it.

Comparison with the prospect of an infant of only a few weeks or months actually experiencing various kinds of psychological distress makes the classical tragedy of the Oedipus situation a few years later on in life seem positively benign and uncontroversial. The idea that in certain situations a helpless baby actually has to put up with feeling anger, frustration, anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty, fear, terror, and possibly envy and hatred (and is able to detect hostility and even insincerity in others, as well as love) is very difficult to swallow indeed.

Analysts in particular have some technical and occupational reasons for preferring the story of primary narcissism. To some extent, these have their roots in Freud, because his writings so decisively align the notion of unconscious mental processes with the prevailing picture of the infant as a receptacle of unstructured drive activity. How can the analyst overcome resistance and dismissal of the world of fantasy in his or her practice if he or she cannot resort to the argument that at one time, the internal world, in some primitive form, was all that existed for us? If analysts cannot infer a direct link between the qualities and structures of the unconscious and the biologically determined states of infancy, how can they prevail on the analysand to accept the value of relinquishing the grip of the adult, conscious ego, and the necessity of plunging into the world of make-believe and fantasy? If we do not all begin in a timeless, objectless,

impulsive state, how can we explain the resurgence of such states in later life? And, perhaps most important of all: how can we know the value of reality, whose constant pressure apparently forces us out of such states, in normal development? If the analyst cannot explain the unconscious as the relic of a period of life when mental activity was entirely devoid of perceptual discrimination, then what is the status of perception, and how perspicuous is the realism to which the unconscious-- and childhood-- are conventionally opposed?

Nevertheless, the precocious infant of contemporary neonatology confirms the original emphasis of psychoanalytic research: the efficacy of fantasy. The importance of the internal world is only reinforced when it no longer requires the alibi of a pristine original state, and emerges instead as an independent (but not autonomous) force, flourishing in coexistence with innate (but not autonomous) ego organization and external sensory perception.

It will be objected by many that the idea of the simultaneous development of perception/cognition and affect/fantasy in early life disregards the fact that the infant is cognitively incapable of separating the two realms, as demonstrated by the fact that even much older children have difficulty making a clear distinction between reality and the world of play. This depends on how we define play, and how we define reality. The assumption implicit in every such objection is the familiar metapsychological dictum that

the ability to perceive derives from the constraints which the environment imposes on the wish-structure of the primordial psyche; that cognition, as opposed to make-believe, is an acquired characteristic of each individual. Even those who want to defend "play" as an ontological category, or to promote some primary libidinal economics, will protest that perception is only a product of desire.

But the boundary between play and reality, which children allegedly perceive less decisively than adults, is in fact an emotionally grounded differentiation which is inexact at the best of times. One can say, with Freud, that the human sensorium is always vulnerable to compromise by "wish" (or "desire"). But this is not the fundamental issue. Wishing is not an affect, but a particular psychic construct arising jointly from the confluence of emotion and cognition, and so it naturally presupposes some communication, and therefore also some differentiation, between conative and epistemological functions. Without some sort of reality perception, there can be no wish, but only the illusive "raw sensation."

The differentiation that Freudian metapsychology (whether conservative or radical) is after lies between affect and perception, rather than wish and reality. But this more fundamental differentiation is not something that an "environment" can produce, according to the logic of individual development, or ontogeny. In statu nascendi, the relation between affect and perception belongs to the

genotype, as a proposition of functional biology. At the level of the phenotype, neither the affiliation nor the differentiation of cognition and emotion can be created, but only modified. The essential difference between them will have to be explained by neurologists and biologists, not by psychoanalysts, social scientists, philosophers, and students of the symbolic process.

Adults "lose" themselves in their activities and allow them to colour the experience of "reality" just as pervasively as do children. The difference between the adult and the child is that the adult has learned to distribute his attention over a wider range of activities, and to proportion the degree of his absorption more subtly on the scale between rapture and indifference. For example, the adult is likely to be more cunning in his calculation of pragmatic advantage (the "reality principle"). The adult may even pride himself on his ability to remain detached from the exciting drama in which his son or daughter drown. But this is only a matter of practical experience and axiological sophistication. It has nothing to do with a greater ability to distinguish between the imagination and "external reality"-- only with an ability to displace energies in more or less effective or adaptive ways, as the adult's almost complete preoccupation with work or genital strivings or books (as opposed to toys, daydreams, and games) would indicate. In other words, the issue is not cognitive perception, but cognitive interest, not the

emergence of new mental faculties, but the arrangement and proportioning of the existing ones, not the discovery of the fact of difference, or the existence of boundaries, but their refinement and consolidation, not the disclosure of reality, whatever that may be, but its constant sifting through experience.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. In a footnote to this statement, the following remarks by Mead were added by his editors: "According to this view, conscious communication develops out of unconscious communication within the social process; conversation in terms of significant gestures out of conversation in terms of non-significant gestures; and the development in such fashion of conscious communication is coincident with the development of minds and selves within the social process" (Mead, 179).

2. The first view has become extremely influential: it is the explicit view of Kohut's "self psychology," but a subtler version of the same argument is to be found in the writings of Winnicott. The second view finds its roots in Hartmann's ego psychology, and is often associated with attempts to integrate psychoanalytic theory with Piaget's ideas about cognitive development. Both Winnicott and Kohut held that the pre-conflictual sybiotic stage of infancy constitutes the foundation of psychic life. The value of their work is confirmed in the fact that there is a growing consensus in the field of psychology generally that the first few months of life, however they may be characterized, are indeed psychologically significant. But as Rangell and the ego psychologists argue, the "self psychology" version of early development tends to encourage a nondynamic conception of the psyche. Since Rangell, like most theorists influenced by Hartmann and/or Piaget, is not prepared to entertain the possibility of awareness in early infancy, his defence of Freud's conflictual model forces him to limit the scope of psychoanalytic theory by concentrating on later stages of childhood, where evidence of dynamic psychological processes is more abundant.

3. While the conclusions of Ainsworth and Bell with regard to correlations between maternal responsiveness, stability of infant-attachment, and subsequent infant behaviour, such as crying or reaction to "strange situations," have been widely accepted, the studies upon which they are based are not methodologically or theoretically irreproachable, as Lamb, et al. (1985) point out. As in all empirical studies of complex interactional "systems," the number of variables it is possible to track in an ongoing parent-infant relationship is limited, and often inadequate. Moreover, significant correlations rarely seem to have much explanatory value, and statistically insignificant or weak correlations may only reflect the fact that the relationship postulated has been inadequately operationalized. How does one break down a "good" parent-infant relationship into measurable components? How does one define a "healthy" environment? How does one "prove" that an infant has a "better" chance in a "better" environment? In the end, the

statistics are only compelling when they compare "extreme" cases to a large batch of "average" cases, but then the results seem rarely to go beyond the predictions of educated common sense. As Lamb et al. comment on one of the Attachment/Strange Situation studies they review: "Again...these results provide some support for the general hypothesis that more desirable parental characteristics tend to be associated with secure Strange Situation behaviour, but they do not specify those aspects of parental behaviour that are important" (81-2).

4. In the case of psychogenic autism, Tustin (1986) has come to the conclusion that there is indeed no sense of self, as might be found in the "confusional entanglement" of the schizophrenic child: "Schizophrenic-type patients and neglected children have developed relationships with people.... Thus they can be said to have a 'false self' and to be narcissistic. The psychogenic autistic child[ren]... avoid human relationships. Thus they are empty of a sense of self, and cannot be said to have a 'false self' or to be narcissistic" (44-5). Tustin does however attribute an encapsulated 'me-ness' to the autistic child, together with a sort of etiolated ego functioning. The crux of her argument is that narcissism presupposes self-object relations, which the autistic child apparently lacks.

5. The difference between the infant's interactions with objects and with people is also noted by Mundy-Castle (1980, 231), who begins with the assumption that "we are born with a disposition to distinguish objects and persons and to react to each in a different manner."

6. Lichtenberg (1987) summarizes this argument well in the following statement: "Infant research indicates that the 24-hour cycle of the infant's life is dominated more by moments of low- or moderate-intensity experience than by the moments of high-intensity conflictual experiences that analytic theory has emphasized. Thus the premise is not confirmed that in ordinary development a major integrative effort is required to overcome the persistent disruptive effects of aggressive drive tensions in order to approach unity of self and object experiences..." (319). According to Eva Lester (1982), Kernberg has recently "corrected himself regarding his statement that affects, 'crude and undifferentiated at birth,' become gradually subtly differentiated and cognitively enriched. He stated that it is the self- and object-representations that are undifferentiated, but affective responses 'can be exquisitely differentiated from birth on'" (211).

7. In the Strange Situation studies pioneered by Ainsworth, for example, infants are divided into B-group (securely attached), A-group (avoidant) and C-group (resistant). As Lamb et al. point out, the widespread assumption that the B-

group is more "adaptive" from an evolutionary point of view is based on meagre evidence, and may reflect the cultural demands placed on the American infant. In North Germany, the A-group is more common, and in Israeli Kibbutzim, the C-group is much larger than in the other two samples (54). In all three studies, the B-group is the largest group, but this does not mean that the B-group reflects a single, precise, phylogenetically-determined scenario of parent-infant interaction for optimal development. One suspects that the differences within the B-group are sometimes as great or greater than the differences between some B, A, and C infants.

Lamb suggests (116) that "individual differences in temperament may affect the infant's cognitive understanding or interpretation of the parent's behavioural style during formatively important periods." It is conceivable that an infant might put a more favourable interpretation on episodes of "inadequate" parenting than an attachment researcher, and have a less favourable experience of "normal" parental responses. In short, there is probably no single pathway on which parent-infant interaction leads to adaptive or maladaptive outcomes (118).

8. In a recent address to the International Psychoanalytical Congress (Montreal 1987), Stern speculated that in the realm of experience, "there is no such thing as centrality."

9. See, for example Stern 1985, 101ff. Klein's developmental perspective is based on the brilliant intuition, derived not only from psychoanalytic reconstructions and play therapy of children, but also on limited but acute observation of children in the first year, that harmony with the object is something to be achieved by the infant. See also Harold Searles's (1965) review of Jacobson (1964), in which he questions the ego-psychological emphasis on "separation" as the major developmental task of the child.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REPRESENTATIONS

The study of infancy is certainly one of the most important new branches of knowledge to emerge in recent years, and it seems that one of its characteristic "occupational hazards" is a necessity to adopt a somewhat agnostic stance with regard to first principles, primary motives, origins, and so on. There is now so much information about the early years that nothing like the confidence evinced by a Freud or a Piaget about the basic starting point of human ontogeny is any longer possible. From the point of view of a theory of symbolization, or the general problem of the existence of meaning in the world, what is striking about the attempts to theorize the current infant research which we have been reviewing is that neither the "self" nor the "object," nor any of a slew of traditionally paired psychological opposites, such as mind and body, or concept and percept, can be assigned any clear ontological precedence or precise theoretical significance. The internal psychodynamic world, itself the integrated (though not necessarily harmonious) achievement of many component "systems," and the "external" world, whether we think of it as perceptual, social, or environmental, are both present and active from the beginning, and mutually dependent. It is just as meaningless to say that subjective processes are derived from social experience as it is to

believe that social processes are derived from subjective experience. From an evolutionary point of view, there is, of course, a certain amount of sense in saying that everything, including meaning, is determined by the "environment," but this is only because from the evolutionary point of view, in the broadest sense, the term environment really refers to "everything that is actually going on." Epistemologically, arguments from the environment have the same structure as arguments from spirit or matter. But as soon as we begin to talk about the causal role of a particular environment, such as an "ecological niche," we are in effect bracketing questions about the ultimate 'nature' of phenomena, and opening ourselves to an interacting field of existents in which there is no ground for talking about first causes. Was the niche created by the organism, or did the organism emerge from the niche? We talk about "grounds" because we live in a gravitational field; and we insist that arguments be supported, but only because otherwise they would "carry no weight."

There really isn't much point in saying that cognition or emotion are the result of, say, "social conditioning," since the latter is only an aspect of the environment (or of spirit or matter, depending on your core philosophy); and it is just as presumptuous to claim that culture, behaviour, or social structure are the results of drives, feelings, or genes, which are also aspects of the "environment," spiritual, material, or systemic, according to theoretical

taste.

In the current state of our knowledge, the problem of symbolization defies explanatory hubris. T.G.R. Bower (1977, 1) states that although the word 'infant' literally means 'without language,' "probably more of the skills that separate human beings from other animals are acquired in infancy than in all the rest of childhood put together." In the grand scheme of things, there is probably nothing all that distinctive about being human, and even within the human orbit, language is probably a lot less special than we think it is. One is even hesitant to pinpoint the exact boundary dividing animal interaction from planetary interaction. All we know is that meaning exists, and although we can begin to distinguish it from everything else, we have to admit that it is like any other part of the world, in that it is neither separable from it nor all-inclusive of it.

Meaning is, of course, the stock in trade of psychoanalytic theory. The concept of meaning has traditionally been tied to language, and curiously enough, this linguistic focus has narrowed markedly in the twentieth century, especially with the advent of analytic philosophy. But the drift of developmental research is now showing signs of moving in the opposite direction and, as I have been trying to show, this has opened up important new avenues for the development of psychoanalytic theory and research in the human sciences. Since Freud, Ferenczi and Abraham, but most

clearly since Klein, psychoanalysis has been trying to orient itself to the well-known fact that language barely emerges until the second year of life. The neonatological revolution has added a certain amount of legitimacy to this theoretical enterprise. With significant modifications of outlook on both sides, the psychoanalytic and experimental paradigms have begun to converge in search of the roots of "meaning" in preverbal psychological developments.

The problem of representation: empathy and the mental image of the object

In the last chapter, we touched briefly on the problem of empathy: the discussion contained an implicit question about whether or not nonverbal infants are able to imagine that certain important aspects of the "holding environment," whether we call them mothers or caretakers or support systems, "have" feelings and desires and intentions like themselves. In effect, the following problem emerged: if preverbally communicating infants experience some sort of primitive internal world, as we have good reason to believe, does this also mean that they get an inclining that others apart from themselves are comparable to themselves and have internal worlds as well?

Before plunging back into the literature, it is worth developing this idea a little further. Let us pretend that the infant thinks not only that it has an inside and an

outside, but that in the outside that it encounters, there are other insides which are like its own (though not identical to its own, since at least some of the time these other insides are experienced precisely as "other": as outside insides). Now, these other insides would include (though not necessarily be limited to) the bodies against which the baby enacts its intermittent but quickly developing capacity to match its own body (by attempting to establish or maintain or solicit a fit or correspondence through expressions of need, reciprocal communicative interactions, imitative gestures, and so on).

The idea that some sort of primitive distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' lies near the beginning of infant psychological development, and not in the culmination of it, can be traced all the way back to Freud. In one of his speculations about the ontogenetic significance of drive experiences, he made the following statement:

This [helpless] organism will very soon be in a position to make a first distinction and a first orientation. On the one hand, it will be aware of stimuli which can be avoided by muscular action (flight); these it ascribes to an external world. On the other hand, it will also be aware of stimuli against which such action is of no avail and whose character of constant pressure persists in spite of it; these stimuli are the signs of an internal world, the evidence of instinctual needs. The perceptual substance of the living organism will thus have found in the efficacy of its muscular activity a basis for distinguishing between an 'outside' and an 'inside' (1915a, 119).

Now if, near the beginning of postnatal life, humans are

able, at times, to experience a world which is not identical with their own feelings, desires, and so on-- if, for example, an infant can perceive that what it wants is frustrated by something beyond its control (something that in standard psychoanalytic parlance is called an "object")-- then another question arises: do these self and other perceiving infants occasionally "project" what they are wanting, fearing, liking, or disliking onto (or as Melanie Klein would say, "into") the object (so that the object is felt to be wanting, fearing, etc.)? And do the same infants, sometimes, "introject" what they imagine the object to be feeling or intending (etc.)? This notion (advanced in particular by the Kleinians) that a primitive differentiation of inside and outside necessarily brings in its wake the 'mechanisms' of projection and introjection-- an imaginary process of exchange between insides-- also takes us back to Freud, as we saw in Chapter Five:

...the original 'reality-ego,' which distinguished internal and external by means of a sound objective criterion, changes into a purified 'pleasure ego,' which places the characteristic of pleasure above all others. For the pleasure-ego the external world is divided into a part that is pleasurable, which it has incorporated into itself, and a remainder that is extraneous to it. It has separated off a part of its own self, which it projects into the external world and feels as hostile... (1915a, 136-7).

Attributing an internal world to the preverbal infant, as we have done, is one thing; but attributing to the same infant the disposition to attribute an internal world to

another-- which is at least a logical precondition of the capacity to empathize-- is altogether another. In the passages from Freud quoted above, we encounter no claim for secondary internal worlds in infancy: there is only the internal world of the baby, all by itself in an otherwise alien environment. This is one way (very different from Winnicott's, for example) of characterizing the state of primary narcissism. In theoretical terms, it is somewhat contradictory, since the differentiation Freud postulates between 'internal' and 'external' would be virtually meaningless in a stage of psychological development during which there is no distinction between self and object. If the "helpless organism" can rid itself of painful feelings by externalizing them, as Freud thought, it must have at its disposal a fairly elaborate imaginative apparatus which is capable of attributing feelings to the 'other.' If the preverbal infant can perceive others-- differentiate them from the inanimate environment, distinguish them from each other, look into their eyes (or avoid them), match their gestures, and respond to their moods (Walker-Evans 1988)-- then the infant can probably imagine that these others, whom it recognizes with smiles and frowns, experience states of feeling comparable to its own. Either that, or the baby doesn't perceive anything as external to itself, has no inside or outside, and has no way of developing a "pleasure ego" by "projecting" its painful states into the external world.

Whatever the truth may be, the idea that the psychological life of the neonate includes an internal world that thinks about other internal worlds-- that recognizes in the environment an element of processess like its own (for example, an intentionality comparable, but separate from its own intentionality) -- has profound implications for psychology and for any theory of symbolization. If babies really attribute a sentient inside to objects other than themselves, as Melanie Klein assumed, then the qualities and the origins of psychological life as we know it are more complicated and mysterious than conventional theorizations have so far allowed. All of the polite talk in the psychological literature about "communicative interaction" in infancy would begin to acquire a depth of reference that was not, in most cases, originally intended. But before pursuing these issues further, I shall devote the rest of this chapter to a discussion of the technical issues which lie in their way.

Part of the problem with the hypothesis being advanced here (that preverbal infants develop the idea that they have an inside, and "project" this idea onto others, so that the world becomes populated with insides) is that it is virtually impossible to express in scientifically acceptable language. Too much of what the intelligent human body does -- or "thinks"-- is unavailable to consciousness except in the form of awkward and evasive metaphors. For example, as we saw in Chapter Six, Meltzoff and Moore, based on their

studies of neonatal imitation, found reason to argue that the infant must be equipped with a representational schema of the human body, through which it is able to recognize, and to reproduce with unseen parts of its own body, facial and manual gestures of others. Meltzoff (1982) stated that "the ability to act on the basis of abstract representations or descriptions of perceptually absent events needs to be considered as the starting point of infant development, not its culmination" (109). But what does it mean to say that a two week old baby, which has been in a R.E.M. state for a good part of its existence, and has spent much of the rest of its postnatal life crying with its eyes shut, or wallowing in various intermediate states between waking and sleeping, acts on the basis of an "abstract representation" of the human body? Presumably, the phrase "abstract representation" refers, in this context, to some sort of neurological substrate which responds to certain stimuli. Is that the same thing as saying that the infant thinks? Or do thinking and symbolization only occur in places where word-like things can be identified: discrete, diacritically marked "mental contents," like representations, images, signs, and the bits and pieces of natural or written language-- the little atomic units of "meaning"? Spitz (1965) explained the early smiling reaction to facial configurations as an Innate Releasing Mechanism devoid of psychic significance, and most psychoanalysts and cognitive psychologists would hold to some variation of Spitz's

argument that object constancy and symbolic process do not begin until eight and eighteen months respectively. On the other hand, Meltzoff insists that in the case of neonatal imitation, the stimulus and the response are so highly specific, so dependent upon integrated perception and organized motor coordination, that some sort of intermediary processing must be involved in the baby's actions. The point is that whether one uses the term 'representation' or not, many of the neonate's recently discovered psychophysical activities satisfy the criteria for "representation" traditionally attributed only to the post-verbal child.

The term 'representation' actually has a distorting effect on our efforts to conceptualize what sort of psychological process is taking place when the mind has no recourse to words, or when thinking simply dispenses with words, and functions on some other basis. In the literature on cognitive psychology, representations have the connotation of permanent mental images of reality, images which correspond to reality and which can be evoked at any time, regardless of the presence or absence to the senses of the reality being represented. Most of the intelligent, interpersonal psychological life of human beings is thought to be predicated on the development of a capacity for such mental representations. But between this capacity on the one hand, and the other extreme of insensate physiologically conditioned responses or primitive neurological structures,

there are in the literature no generally accepted middle terms, apart from the vocabulary of "fleeting images" tied to the presence of immediate stimuli and disappearing into the void thereafter. In consequence, the scientifically accepted discourse on intelligent emotional life has become wedded to the language of representation, with all of the conceptual limitations and philosophical baggage that it entails. It is as if a kind of binary system of cognitive evaluation has been set up, such that any preverbal activity which fails to measure up plausibly to the notion of the realistic image persisting autonomously in the mind tends to be relegated to a pre-symbolic organization of the mind where emotional relationships are thought to be "egocentric" and the significance of mental activity in general is restricted to its cognitive quotient on the motoric and perceptual developmental scales.

It is very difficult to state the problem of the inside and the outside for the infant in a vocabulary organized along the lines of a theory of representation. M.M. Shields reasons that, in "learning to communicate," the child "must not only himself have representations of the world which forms the context of communication, he must also develop representations about the internal representations of others" (537-8). (This is essentially the problem of empathy.) The question then becomes: at what stage of development does the child come to possess "representations"? And more specifically, when do children

begin representing to themselves others' representations? Unfortunately, when couched in these terms, questions about perverbal communication are difficult to answer in the affirmative. In fact, they seem preposterous, as the respected infant researcher, Kenneth Kaye (1982) has argued. It is, after all, implausible to maintain that infants form stable cognitive representations of other people's states of mind, and so, Kaye reasons, it is misleading to describe the infant's expressions of need as intentional acts of communication, as if the baby were contributing to an ongoing "intersubjective discourse" based on rational presuppositions about human intentionality and illocutionary validity, such as philosophers like John Searles or Jurgen Habermas might prescribe as prerequisites of valid or "undistorted" communication. From Kaye's point of view, the much touted "reciprocity" of the infant's interactions with its caretakers turns out to exist only in the minds of the observers or parents, as an empathic projection on their part-- noble in intention, and perhaps even beneficial to the infant, but unfounded in psychological fact.

Piaget linked the origins of the child's representational capacity to the establishment of object permanence, which occurs at the end of the period of sensorimotor learning (see Chapter Six). Until then, according to Piaget's timetable, the child is unable to perceive the object, or think of it, as a separate entity with an independent existence. Confused images of things

may flit through the infant's mind, and eventually there develops an ability to perceive and even to manipulate things to the extent that they can be recognized as indices of the child's own activity. In Stage Five, the penultimate phase of sensorimotor development, the child can find an object, so long as it remains hidden behind the screen where it was first placed. The theory in this case is that a momentary "representation" of the object has persisted, cued by the perceptual contiguity of the object and the screen. So long as the screen remains available to immediate perception, and so long as the object is not moved to another hiding place, the Stage Five child can retrieve it. If the object is subsequently placed behind another screen, the child continues to search behind the first screen, and is not able to find it behind the second screen until Stage Six. The child's ability to represent the object in the mind, and thus to continue to believe in its existence, is tied to the visual sign of the screen behind which the object was first hidden, and thus disappears once the object is removed, even though the child sees the object again when it is being removed to the second hiding place.

As implausible as this explanation may sound, it has been the focus of much informed attention, for the very good reason that it is a systematic, parsimonious interpretation of visibly observable behaviour. One of the most lucid discussions of it was provided by Selma Fraiberg (1969). Fraiberg pointed out that psychoanalysts were confused about

the use of such Piagetian terms as "object constancy" and "representation." Object constancy normally refers to the infant's ability to perceive the identity of an object through the transformations of shape and size which it would undergo when moved through a hypothetical two-dimensional field of perception, such as the classical psychophysiology of perception attributes to the unaided visual end organ. In Piaget's theory, object constancy is a forerunner of object permanence: it refers only to the mind's function of adding a schema to perception, as a kind of place holder to orient the raw visual data. But psychoanalysts have used the term 'constancy' as if it meant 'permanence', i.e., the maintenance in the mind of a stable object representation, independent of the observer and maintained during its sensory absence. Moreover, they have tended to use the term constancy, which refers to the perceptual cognition of things, as if it had a bearing on the child's capacity for object relations, the constancy of the child's emotional attachment to the libidinal object, the mother, caretaker, or holding environment.

One of Fraiberg's conclusions is that psychoanalysts have been wrong in confusing object constancy with object permanence, since in doing so, they have interpreted a fleeting perceptual image as if it were an abiding mental representation, and found evidence of recall memory of the absent object where there was only cued recognition dependent upon the immediate presence of a perceptual or

proprioceptive stimulus. On the other hand, Fraiberg agrees with many psychoanalysts when they assume that emotional object constancy, or attachment to a specific object, depends upon the development, in Piagetian terms, of cognitive object permanence: the capacity to represent an object in the mind as an independently existing entity, no matter how long it remains outside the field of immediate perception.

The cognitive, Piagetian concept of representation was elaborated by Sandler and Rosenblatt (1962) into an influential view of the psyche as a "representational world." Their concept of the representational world is closely related, in turn, to the concept of psychic structure in psychoanalytic theory. The term 'structure' is derived from Freud's conception of the structural point of view, in which he proposed a functional concept of the ego in structural relation to a superego and an id. It was primarily Hartmann who developed this point of view into the paradigm of ego psychology, in which the ego and the id are seen as structural differentiations of an undifferentiated matrix.

First the infant does not distinguish between the objects and his activities vis-a-vis the objects. In the words of Piaget, the object is still nothing but a prolongation of the child's activity. Later, in the course of those processes that lead to a distinction of object and self, the child also learns to make a distinction between his activity and the object toward which this activity is directed. The earlier stage may be correlated with magic action and

probably represents a transitory step in ego (or, rather, pre-ego) development, interposed between simple discharge and true ego-directed and organized action.... Piaget's finding agrees rather well with the findings of analysis, and it means, metapsychologically speaking, that from then on there is a difference between the cathexis of an object-directed ego function and the cathexis of an object representation (1953, 187f.).

According to Stolorow's (1978) summary of Hartmann's contribution, "[psychic] structure is inferred when autonomous self-regulation replaces regulation by the environment and when modes of function become stabilized and resistive to regressive instinctualization" (314-5).¹ The id and the ego are, respectively, the functional organization of drive-need dispositions, and the mechanisms of their regulation, which include perception and defence. These ego-id structures develop both internally and in relation to each other through assimilation of the regulatory functions of the environment, resulting in simple perceptions of libidinal objects. As these develop in complexity, they give rise, in turn, to a differentiated conception of the primary objects, a process which lays the groundwork for Oedipal conflict. The distinguishing characteristic of this phase of development is that the child's emotional world grows less and less dominated by dyadic constellations of needs and need-satisfying objects. The turning point is that a rivalry develops with a third object; in the little boy, it is the resolution of the ensuing conflicts, through introjection of the paternal

rival and identification with him (superego formation), that establishes the tripartite psychic structure to which Freud referred. (A similar sort of itinerary is said to be followed by little girls, although the details have remained in dispute.)

Sandler and Rosenblatt reworked this standard psychoanalytic plan of the development of psychic structure in terms of Piaget's constructionist epistemology. They argue that "perception of objects in the external world cannot take place without the development, within the ego of the child, of an increasingly organized and complex set of representations of external reality..." (131). By perception, Sandler is referring to "the means [by] which the ego transforms raw sensory data into meaningful percepts" (131-2). It follows from this that the child cannot really begin to develop a meaningful conception of 'inside' and 'outside' until the middle of the second year, because "in order to know what is 'outside,' the child has to create a representation of that 'outside' as part of his representational world" (132). This way of putting things has important consequences for psychoanalytic theory, particularly with respect to such notions as "introjection" and "identification," and for the general idea that there is an adaptive process, involving the internalization of object relations, which culminates in the formation of the superego. Sandler and Rosenblatt maintain that such processes are impossible prior to the formation in the mind

of a representational world, and that introjection of love objects "can only take place after the child has learned to perceive his objects, i.e., after he has created stable object representations in his representational world" (132). But one paradoxical result of this argument (for a psychoanalyst, at least) is the implication that, on epistemological grounds, children only become capable of fantasizing after their perception has become functionally attuned to "external reality." In this distinctly un-Freudian view, the representational world establishes the groundwork for all the basic psychic activities. It "provides the material for the ego's perceptual structuring of sensory impulses, for imagination and fantasy, for direct and modified action, for language, symbols, and for trial action in thought" (136).

The contribution of Sandler and Rosenblatt was an attempt to clarify psychoanalytic terminology, and it has had an important influence on subsequent efforts to revise psychoanalytic theory along more scientifically acceptable lines. Recently, a number of psychoanalytic writers have begun to question the viability of classical metapsychology, in particular the notion that the child "introjects" libidinal objects or "internalizes" the regulatory functions of the environment-- even after it has attained the all-important stage of representations. After all, as Sandler and Rosenblatt had argued, the notion of having an 'inside' which is different from the 'outside,' and into which

something could be introjected, is not based on actual experience; it is a cognitive construct, derived from the formation of a representational world. Theorists like Roy Schafer (1976) and Robert Stolorow (1978) have extended this argument into the realm of epistemology, where they have pointed out that the language of metapsychology is derived from antiquated mechanistic or energistic scientific paradigms, steeped in a concretistic terminology, and still contaminated with vestiges of animistic and essentialist pre-scientific world views. They recommend instead a non-speculative, clinically-based theory (G. Klein 1976) derived mainly from the "phenomenological" or linguistic analysis of psychic contents-- in particular, the analysis of representations.

According to Stolorow, ego development does not reflect a dynamic process involving such magical notions as introjection; rather, it is "a progressive structuration of the representational world":

From the standpoint of object representations, the attainment of a high degree of structuration, the product of adequate representational differentiation and integration, is signalled by the achievement of 'object constancy' [i.e., permanence]-- the capacity to sustain and relate to a differentiated and enduring image of another person who is valued for his real (positive and negative) qualities and is appreciated as an individual with needs and feelings of his own (1978, 316).

In Stolorow's view, this parsimonious conception of the psyche must also be applied to the experience of conflict.

The classical notion of structural conflict (e.g., conflict between ego and superego) catches developmental theory up in "concretistic reifications and anthropomorphisms" (317).

The developmental milestones (e.g., object constancy) which make conflict possible at the Oedipal stage must, again, be understood exclusively in terms of the progressive structuration of the representational world. Conflict is the result of conflicting representations:

To experience the self as torn between urges and moral prohibitions requires, among other things, a relatively high degree of self-object differentiation and representational integration as well as a depersonification and abstraction of the moral aspects of early object imagoes-- the products of considerable cognitive, emotional, and social development.

The conceptual approach derived from the theory of a representational world is a supraordinate, holistic one, based on the principle of structural invariance (Atwood & Stolorow 1984, 33): the 'self' develops through time, but always as a unity which is presupposed, and whose fluctuations and development are thought to depend predominantly on the nature of the environmental input. It is seen as a relationship of representations striving to maintain unity, integrity, and coherence. This cohesion will be progressively maintained through "phase-appropriate" self-object experiences, and it will be aborted by experiences which are not appropriate (Stolorow 1979, 39-40). The introspective sense of sexuality as a physical force and as an energy which rises and ebbs in the body, and

the subjective intuition that meaning is somehow related to sensations of intensity and efforts of concentration-- the space for this sort of thing in the general theory of the psyche-- is taken over by the general concept of the structural relationships between representative ideas (cognitive structures corresponding to "phases" of self-environment experience). This viewpoint results in a systematically developmentalistic interpretation of all psychological phenomena in which it is assumed, at least implicitly, that psychological health is something that can be indexed on a temporal scale of mental contents, and that stages of development can be read off from "representations." The bodily aspect of the psyche tends as a result to be split off, at least in the theory: the concepts of 'drive' and 'defense' (for example, 'repression' and 'dynamic unconscious' [Atwood & Stolorow, 35-6; G. Klein, 258ff.]) are absorbed into a new, somewhat euphemistic terminology, consisting of phrases like "motivated contact with the environment" (G. Klein) and "negative organizing principle" (Atwood & Stolorow). Everything seems to get swallowed up in the relational whole, i.e., the structure of the representational world, whether 'normal' or 'abortive' (though the clinical material presented usually suggests, as in most psychoanalytic reports, a much more complicated process of therapeutic understanding).

Whereas Hartmann, Spitz, Sandler and others were

attempting to integrate Piagetian cognitive psychology into Freudian metapsychology and drive theory, more recent innovations such as those of George Klein, Roy Schafer, Merton Gill, and Robert Holt are intended to jettison the drives entirely, and to rewrite psychoanalytic theory in terms of cognitive theory (George Klein 1976), particular schools of philosophical language analysis (Schafer 1978; Lacan 1966), structuralism (Atwood & Stolorow 1984), or cybernetics and information theory (Peterfreund 1978). The emphasis on language as a developmental milestone has been especially prominent. According to Grossman (1982), "The process itself of learning to communicate through language may be essential to the capacity to have object representations of self and other" (934). Of course, the campaign to "clean up" and "up date" the classical metapsychology has certain attractions and merits, not least of which is the wish to correct the obvious weaknesses of the drive theory (in particular, the notion of behaviour as the resultant of a force which seeks "discharge" [cf. G. Klein, e.g., 259-279]).² But the net effect has been to exacerbate the problem which gave rise to dissatisfaction with the metapsychology in the first place: epistemological revisionism in psychoanalytic theory has only increased the tendency to adopt experience-distant abstractions and to write about them as if they were fundamental building blocks of psychic structure and process. The concept of representation is an excellent example of this.

"Phenomenologically" (to use one of the code words of psychoanalytic reform theory), the term 'representation' is actually much more problematic than the term 'drive.' From the point of view of a theory of symbolization, it has had a particularly devastating effect. It tends to reinforce the pre-Freudian mind-body split, in part by diluting or simply abandoning the original psychoanalytic inspiration to link the genesis of meaning to bodily experience. And it serves as a kind of Trojan Horse for importing all sorts of academic habits of thinking, in particular the long-standing tendency of applying adultomorphic criteria in judging the presence or absence of meaningful psychological processes in childhood (such as memory; see above, Chapter Seven). At their most extreme, recent trends in psychoanalytic theorizing signify a return to the tradition of Platonic Rationalism, in which high-level abstractions are concretized, and laid down as the cornerstones of a theory of meaning.

Representations in psychoanalytic theory connote stable psychic structures (e.g., a strict paternal superego), and though they are useful to identify in practice, in theory they presuppose the development of these structures. A representation is an enduring piece of psychic content: a discrete, bounded, repeating constellation of wish, intention, experience, history. Such chunks of meaning are the fundamentals of character structure, but to talk about psychological development exclusively in terms of

representation is to say almost nothing about psychic activity itself: it simply takes the end product of the symbolic process, its externalization as a discrete formation within the mind, and treats it as a given, a starting block. For the purposes of high level theorization it is intended to serve, there is nothing especially wrong with the concept of representation; but it completely bypasses the problem which Freud posed, and with which psychoanalysis has been grappling, and sets out on another course entirely, which is closer to that of Piaget or cognitive psychology.

As Laurence Friedman (1980) has pointed out, the concept of 'representation,' especially when it is used as an epistemological purgative designed to purify psychoanalytic theory, is attractive precisely because it presupposes the problematic experiences of feeling, dreaming, and desiring without having to acknowledge them explicitly (216-7). Like the classical concepts of spirit, matter, or environment, "the representational world would signify everything that one could experience... as one is presently constituted" (218). But the generalized schematic "structures" of meaning which (based on the criterion of "object permanence") qualify as bona fide representations in psychoanalytic and cognitive theory (primarily the socially constructed significations which begin to make an active appearance during the second year of life) are inappropriate candidates for the role of constituent units of symbolic

process. When they are hypostatized in this way, a kind of two-tiered ontology is implicitly established: on the one hand, there is a world replete with significations (the famous realm of human culture and organized social life); and on the other there is biochemical physical reality, irrelevant to the problem of meaning, and bridged only by hunger and the theory of pre-symbolic, sensorimotor development.

As we have already seen, the representational theory of psychological development is frequently cited as proof that symbolization does not occur in preverbal infancy, and that small children are, in Piaget's terms, "egocentric," and perhaps incapable of conceiving the existence of other internal worlds, because they have not yet reached the stage of cognitive development in which they will have formed the appropriate representations.³ This means that children do not produce representations of their mothers in their minds -- they do not perceive or conceive their mothers as specific, enduring, and discrete parts of an objective environment, an object world external to and independent of their own psychomotor activities, their perceptions, gestures, and wishes-- until they have been around their mothers for a year and a half or more, and have already been expressing themselves to their mothers and others with crude verbal behaviour for several months already. Two questions are raised by this. First: to what extent is this assumption about the psychic life (or lack thereof) of pre-

and proto-verbal children correct? And secondly: if it is correct, does it rule out symbolic processes in children less than eighteen months of age, and render invalid the hypothesis that preverbal children differentiate between internal and external, inside and outside, self and other?

The answer to the first question is that these assumptions about the preverbal infant are neither correct nor incorrect, they are simply inappropriate. Although the facts do not support the theory of complete undifferentiation in any area of the child's psychological functioning, there is no doubt that problems related to the capacity for differentiation and individuation in infancy are very real ones. Since these problems persist throughout life, however, it is useless to expect their solution at some stage of childhood-- and inconsequential to point out that they are not solved during the first two years. There is no evidence that human beings are barred by cognitive deficit from some degree of emotional individuation during the first year of life, and none that they are prevented from perceiving differences because their emotional lives are too primitive. This means that the answer to the second question is no.

The psychoanalytic theory of emotional development and the Piagetian theory of cognitive development converge on the idea, central to the theory of childhood narcissism or egocentrism, that representations are what get the child over the illusion that the persons and things it perceives

are simply extensions of itself, dependent upon its wishes or sensorimotor activities. The theory of childhood egocentrism was originally based on general considerations about human nature, and on relatively crude, but not necessarily inaccurate, observations of children's behaviour. The general acceptance in psychoanalytic and psychological circles of childhood egocentrism is, however, considerably reinforced today by Piaget's interpretations of very fine grained observations of children in carefully designed experimental situations.

Piaget illustrated that until the age of about eight, you cannot expect children to articulate how something appears to someone else looking from a different angle. In other words, children under the age of eight cannot reconstruct a perspective different from their own. They are, apparently, not even aware that such a perspective exists until after they are four. When asked to demonstrate perspective role taking, four and five year olds simply reproduce their own point of view; and although children slightly older begin to introduce some variations, they fail to complete the task successfully. A "decentred" or "sociocentric" way of thinking about how things look does not really start to take hold until the age of about seven, but remains uncertain and generally inaccurate until after the age of twelve. Piaget concluded that a young child simply "cannot yet distinguish his point of view from that of others;" and with Inhelder, in The Child's Conception of

Space, he interpreted the results of their experiments by arguing that these children "fail to realize that different observers will employ different perspectives and... regard their own point of view as the only one possible" (1956, 32).⁴

The 'Three Mountain' experiments upon which these conclusions are based provide a good example of the confusion which arises when emotional capacities in general are measured too precisely on a cognitive scale of development. The Three Mountain display which Piaget used (a relatively undifferentiated, abstract arrangement of three irregular shapes), is essentially a measure of the capacity for abstract thinking. It bears only indirectly on a child's awareness that there are perspectives and intentions other than its own. When experimental subjects in the same age groups, or younger, are given more familiar objects to work with, and simpler ways of identifying different points of view (such as rotating the display, rather than selecting pictures or constructing models), they have much less trouble identifying the way things look from different positions. The point is that the results which Piaget and Inhelder obtained were to a large extent functions of the difficulty of the tasks the children were asked to perform, and not a consequence of their being locked into a fixed, subject-centered frame of reference. As Helene Borke has argued, the childhood egocentrism hypothesis is based on the "error of confounding empathic

development with cognitive development" (36; cf. Cox, 30).

In fact, even preverbal infants cognize perspectives other than their own. As we have already seen, they act with respect to objects as if they have unseen dimensions, and as if they continue to exist when they are out of sight. They are able to transpose actions originating from another perspective into their own frame of reference, as in the case of neonatal imitation. And they will look to see where the mother is looking, which implies a complicated process requiring a) knowledge that the other can see as well; b) awareness that what other people see is not necessarily what is in the immediate field of vision; and c) an ability to calculate the angles necessary for tracking the other's line of vision. As Scaife and Bruner (1975) put it:

It is possible that the ability to orient with respect to another has implications for Piaget's more complex notions of the egocentric child. In so far as mutual orientation implies a degree of knowledge in some form about another person's perspective then the child in its first year may be considered as less than completely egocentric (266; cf. Butterworth 1983, 12-16).⁵

Piaget and Inhelder (1969) summarized their approach in this way:

We have assumed that affective decentering is a correlative of cognitive decentering, not because one dominates the other, but because both occur as a result of a single integrated process [sensorimotor development]. Indeed, when the little child ceases to relate everything to his states and to his own action, and begins to substitute for a world of fluctuating tableaux

without spatio-temporal consistency or external physical causality a universe of permanent objects structured according to its own groups of spatio-temporal displacements and according to an objectified and spatialized causality, then his affectivity will also be attached to these localizable permanent objects and sources of external causality which persons come to be. Whence the formation of "object relations" in close connection with the scheme of permanent objects (26).

Given the evidence now available to us, however, we must assume a contrasting position, in which the construction of mental representations is no longer seen as the basis for intrapsychic activity, or for meaningful relationships with differentiated objects. While the rise and development of the capacity (which Piaget locates at the end of sensorimotor development) "to represent something... by means of a signifier" (51) enormously enhances the child's capacity to refine its concepts of objects and of perspectival relativity, it is not a prerequisite for coherent and interrelated perceptions of the external world, for object permanence, for emotional attachment to a specific object, or for communication based on the recognition of the difference of the other.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. On Hartmann's concept of internalization, see also Schafer (1968, 8).

2. For example, G. Klein (72-120) makes an interesting proposal to replace the libido theory of sexuality with a theory of sexuality as sensual experience (see 115). One important feature of his argument is that it dispenses with the metapsychological postulate of a fixed quantum of psychic energy (which he quite rightly characterizes as an arbitrary and extraneous inference from clinical data), so that displacement, for example, would no longer have to be conceptualized as the type of process where Peter need be robbed in order to pay Paul (i.e., sublimation would not necessarily imply a corresponding diminution of sexual activity). Unfortunately, Klein subordinates sexuality (and sensuality) to cognitive schemata, stating, for example: "It would be foolish to say that the baby from the start seeks sensual pleasure [!] The experience of needing, and therefore of seeking, presumes a cognitive record, not simply a contentless build-up of tension" (116).

3. See, for example, Lichtenberg (1987, 312-316). Lichtenberg sees psychic process as dependent on cognitive developments associated with "symbolic representation" at the end of the second year. He compares the preverbal infant to the caterpillar before it becomes a butterfly or a moth--infants are qualitatively different beings, incommensurable with language users endowed with a capacity for representation. See also, Blum (1978).

Psychoanalytic theorists have always been fond of epigenetic models of development. But there is something anachronistically Hegelian (or Spencerian, or Comtean, or Marxist) about such models when they are insisted upon too rigidly: psychological developments are supposed to occur in sequences of prerequisites, in which all the features of one stage are held to be dependent, in some logical way, upon the completion of the previous stage, and impossible prior to it. The logical series model of progression in time has a firm hold in the social sciences as well. It is certainly true that the sequence of events and achievements in the history of an individual or a society will affect the outcome, and influence the character of the individual or society. But it is by no means certain that all developmental achievements are stage-specific, and sequence dependent.

4. For an interesting discussion of Piaget and Inhelder's experiments, see Cox (1986).

5. Discussing the significance of experiments on joint visual attention, Bruner (1983, 74) comments "on the seeming departure from egocentrism these infants showed. After all, they were able to take another's perspective in searching the environment. Doubtless there are many respects in which which infants and young children are egocentric in the sense Piaget and others have intended, but I think it is necessary to recognize that there is an important countervailing tendency operative. The briefest way of characterizing it is to say that infants and young children from very early on appear, like adults, to be Naive Realists who believe that there is a world of objects 'out there' and that others are experiencing the same world that they are. And, indeed, whatever philosophical position we adults eventually take, however constructionalist our epistemology may become, I think Naive Realism is everybody's working belief...." See also Bruner (1980) for more detailed comments on these issues.

CHAPTER NINE

LANGUAGE

The study of grammar raises problems that we have some hope of solving; the creative use of language is a mystery that eludes our grasp (Chomsky 1981, 8).

The problem of representation: language and sociability

The term 'pre-verbal' can be very misleading because it implies a sharp division between the infant who is "without language" and the child who has "acquired" language. This is essentially the division that Piaget makes between the "prerepresentational" sensorimotor child and the child who has begun to develop the "semiotic function," which consists of "language, mental image, symbolic gesture, and so on" (Piaget & Inhelder 1969, 51). In this list, there are already some elements of the confusion which has pervaded the discussion of "representation" in child development. "Language" is the prototypical form of abstract representation (although, as Piaget points out, it is not necessarily the basis of logic); in contrast, "mental images" presuppose a degree of psychological growth that would now appear difficult to deny the sensorimotor child; and "symbolic gestures" have come to be considered by many, such as Jerome Bruner, as precursors of the ability to use language, rather than as parts of a general package of representational capacities which come into being simultaneously at the end of the sensorimotor stage.

Recent research has begun to emphasize the continuity

between the infant and the language user, and to question the longstanding assumption that there is, at the onset of language use, a kind of "epistemological break" in development.¹ In a widely discussed text, M.A.K. Halliday (1975) noted that the functional categories of grammar (e.g., subject, agent, object, process) are themselves semantic in origin, and that they all have their foundations in prelinguistic development (4). The implication of this statement is that the growth of the capacity to mean is contingent on the social learning process-- that the categories of grammar themselves have to be learned-- and that there is something 'extralinguistic' about the way in which the meaning process is established. Jerome Bruner and his students have been the most effective proponents of the view that language learning is embedded in pre-linguistic social "competence." Bruner argues that "primitive" (i.e., protolinguistic) "speech-act" patterns are grounded in a preverbal action language (which is culturally contingent), and form the matrix of "lexico-grammatical achievements" (38). According to Bruner,

It is not the case that language, when it is encountered and then used, is the first instance of abstract rule following. It is not, for example, in language alone that the child makes such distinctions as those between specific and non-specific, between states and processes, between "punctual" acts and recurrent ones, between causative and noncausative actions (30).

Both Bruner and Halliday stress the fact that not all the structuring features of language are exclusive to language,

and that some of the most basic ones can be observed before they are activated linguistically. In other words, the question whether certain linguistic structures are innate (as Chomsky surmised), or learned, is secondary to the fact that many of them are not inherently linguistic at all. There is undoubtedly an interaction between experience and endowment, cultural environment and innate perceptual structures, which influences the language acquisition process (Bickerton 1981). But linguistic structure and usage in themselves, whether learned or innate, are not the seat of the capacity for thought.² This view is echoed by Edelson (1975), who argues from a psychoanalytic point of view that the "rules" governing language acquisition are not restricted to language: they also regulate play, dream formation, and defence (see also Lakoff [1978] and Smith [1981]).

In a striking formulation, John Newson (1979, 214) has drawn attention to "a high level of shared meaningful communication at a completely nonverbal level" in infancy. But as we have already seen, there is more than one way of interpreting the evidence for this. Part of the problem is that the concept of meaning is so deeply tied to our concept of language that the notion of preverbal semantics inevitably gives rise to a confusing attempt to discover language-like features in infant behaviour. The standard option in much of the literature seems to be to pick out the social interactional frames which accompany ordinary exchanges of speech, and to relate them back to infancy.

From this starting point, one can proceed to interpret the infant's behaviour (somewhat anachronistically) in terms of linguistic forms of interchange; or one can simplify language sufficiently to make it seem more like a direct outgrowth of the infant's social world. In a statement that characteristically leans in this direction, Bruner (1977, 273) argues that "language acquisition is enormously aided by the child's pre-linguistic grasp of concepts and meanings and that many of the organizing features of syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and even phonology may have important precursors and prerequisites in the prespeech communicative acts of infants." This is almost certainly true, but as Bruner (1983) also points out, this "Language Acquisition Support System" (LASS), or social "scaffolding" within which the child learns to use language, "is by no means exclusively linguistic" (120). Once the theorist (or observer) is ensconced in the developmental-interactionist perspective, it becomes difficult to determine what counts as language and what does not.

The simplest solution to this problem is to define meaning restrictively, and thus to revert to the position that symbolization is synonymous with language, or coeval with it, and exclusive of infancy. Many students of development have adopted this position in order to try to introduce clarity into the discussion. Lichtenberg (1983, 1987) and Blum (1978) draw a sharp distinction between the infant's affective-expressive behaviours on the one hand,

and language and other symbolic forms which appear in the second half of the second year. This may be said to represent the dominant view in both psychoanalysis and developmental psychology. In the present study, however, the terms symbolization and symbol-formation have been reserved for the possibility of "meaning" of any kind at any stage of life after birth, except when the term 'meaning' is confined, by definition or convention or other means as yet unknown, to literal reference or logical implication-- in which case, the term 'signification' is preferable anyway. I have taken literal reference and logical entailment to be formal possibilities of symbolic activity peculiar to and/or dependent upon language and language-like systems of notational abstraction. In short, I consider it futile to restrict the terms for meaning to any precise formal criterion or stage of psychological development, and will treat 'symbolization,' 'language,' and 'logic' as overlapping categories which nevertheless escape each other's grasp at crucial points.

T.G.R. Bower (1979, 142) has stated that "babies begin life as very abstract thinkers." But, as Freud understood nearly a century ago, to analyze the issue of meaning from a child's point of view is to abandon the possibility of explaining the semantic domain in terms of the formal structures of adult linguistic usage alone. The act or intention to mean is itself supraordinate to its particular linguistic or logical forms and, in Halliday's words, the

child "learns to mean long before he adopts the lexical mode for the realization of meanings" (1975, 9). Since there is presumably some more general contextual source out of which semantic paradigms are developed (at least some of them)-- and since it is probably better not to try to explain the rudimentary elements of semantic structure teleologically by starting with forms derived from purely linguistic or logical analysis-- "it becomes necessary to look beyond the language itself" (Halliday, 5) for the "meaning of meaning."

But the question remains: where "beyond language" does one look? As we have seen over and over again, a consensus has developed around the ego-psychological view, as represented classically by such writers as Werner and Kaplan (1963), Spitz (1957), and Mahler (1975), that differentiation from the other is an important prerequisite for symbolization. But our review strongly suggests, to the contrary, that the semantic domain emerges in the activity of differentiation itself, rather than as a result of it. At any rate, subject-object differentiation offers too narrow a category for classification of infant activities. The developmental moment of differentiation has in fact receded with the growth of research into early infancy. To retrace the relations of self and other to the point where they converge in ontogenetic prehistory is to chart an asymptotic course into mystical regions of biological metaphor (i.e., "symbiosis"), on the thresholds of pre-natal life.

Another reason why the emphasis on differentiation does not throw very much light on the problem of symbolization is that the hypothetical, quasi-biological fusion of the mother/child "dual unity" in earliest childhood corresponds to one of the two most meaningful, symbolically-charged polarities of the affective-semantic domain as psychoanalysis traditionally understands it (the other being "autonomy" (Hartmann), "independence" (Winnicott), "mature dependency" (Fairbairn), or "genitality" (Ferenczi)). Whether we think in terms of "primary narcissism," "undifferentiation," "symbiosis," "oceanic feeling," or the "Imaginary," the "pre-Symbolic" stage of development in psychoanalytic theory is defined essentially in terms of its psychological meaning for the infant, and there is no reason to distinguish such "undifferentiated" states from the ordinary or "true" capacity for symbolization, so long as one does not insist on measuring them against the yardstick of representation. In fact, this point was fairly well made some time ago by Werner and Kaplan (1963), who emphasized the importance of the "primordial sharing situation" between mother and infant in the development of symbolization. Another example of such a theoretical compromise is presented by Drucker (1979). Although he states (32) that "symbolization [requires] the establishment of separate mental representations of self and object," he adds that "it may be to the period when such representations are still being established that we must look for the precursors of

true symbols as well."

In view of the fact that psychological differentiation from the "other" begins long before the advent of language use, and even prior to "object permanence," according to Piaget's schedule, the fusional strivings of the infant really ought to be treated as aspects of symbolization vital to any semantic theory. From this point of view, the more valuable contribution of the ego psychological group lies in its emphasis on the child's attempts to objectify proprioception (the experience of somatic functioning). This link between bodily experience and symbolization dates back to Ferenczi (1913), and to Freud's (1923) hypothesis that the first ego is a "bodily ego." Even the Piagetian emphasis on action-schemas fits well with this interest in primitive conceptualizations of the body. So long as we are not too bothered by the ambiguities of traditional metapsychology and cognitive psychology, the ego perspectives of Hartmann (1939), Winnicott (1958, 1965, 1971), Mahler (1975), and Lester (1983) serve well enough as heuristic developmental frames of reference.

In the light of the new knowledge about infants, researchers in language development inspired by Bowlby and Ainsworth, and social interactionists following the leads of Mead, Vygotsky, or Skinner, have also begun to attack the problem of the prelinguistic foundations of the semantic domain. In the words of M.M. Shields, "the growing literature on the apprenticeship of young babies and on

prelinguistic and protolinguistic communication is beginning to illuminate [the] interpersonal generation of meaning...." The idea that babies recognize and accomodate the other to some measurable extent from the very beginning forces us, according to these writers, to revise conventional models of the relationship between language and behaviour. But, as previously noted, there is a danger that this theoretical breakthrough will lead to another extreme: not necessarily the familiar dichotomy of language and the body that one finds in theories of mental representation, but rather a reduction of the question of the genesis of meaning to the genesis of language (or vice versa). Shields seems to warn against such a possibility when he states that "Basic structural features of language provide clues to the structural features of social cognition, but only if these linguistic features are considered in the light of their place in interpersonal communication" (541). As Trevarthen (1979) puts it: "the communicative processes of infants are not merely latent precursors of language" (343).

Much of the new language acquisition research has been skewed in the interests of refuting Chomsky's hypothesis of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD). In its extreme form, the argument against LAD verges on the idea that language acquisition depends upon the patterns of preverbal interpersonal communication. On the surface, this qualification of Chomsky seems incontestable; but in such a complex new field, the line between necessary and sufficient

causes is understandably blurry. The centrepiece of Chomsky's hypothesis was that language acquisition proceeds from an autonomous generative base, and that grammatical rules are acquired with minimal input from the environment. Chomsky (1981) also believes that there is "little reason to suppose that the principles of grammar or universal grammar have any close analogue in other cognitive systems" (33). The ideal anti-Chomskian strategy would be to argue that the ability to speak a language is entirely a product of social conditioning and/or sensorimotor development. Of course, there are very few who hold either position in its pristine form. There is a growing tendency to seek some sort of compromise between Chomskian innate structures and social learning.³ Bruner speaks of "burying" Chomsky, though in fact he adopts a middle position, which recognizes the value of LAD for helping to clarify exactly what it is that the child has to learn when it learns language (1979, 266-69). It is now almost universally conceded that a "first language" is very different from adult language, and cannot be acquired solely by association, or by the child's imitation of what it hears. This is a major concession to Chomsky; but the temptation to move back in the direction of socio-cultural determinism is still latent in a number of research reports detailing the "reciprocity," "mutuality," and "shared meanings" of mother-infant preverbal "conversations," particularly when these conversations are viewed as manipulative, one-sided productions of the parent,

designed to elicit conversation-like behaviour in the infant (e.g., Kaye 1982). There is still a tendency to assimilate the infant's symbolic world to a linguistic teleology, by smoothing over the transition from bodily intersubjectivity in infancy to verbal exchanges in later childhood.⁴

Gesture, deixis, and empathy

A great deal of research has been done on the proto-conversational rhythms of mother-infant communication, with emphasis on turn-taking, non-verbal deictic reference (e.g., pointing to a third object), jointly-focussed attention, initiation of communication, and so on. It was discovered that patterns of eye contact between mother and infant have the same function of initiating, sustaining, and terminating focussed sequences of dyadic interaction as they do in normal adult conversation-- with the difference that the mother typically holds the infant's gaze for lengthy periods as she speaks (Stern 1977, 18f.). Much was written about the teaching value of baby-talk, and the apparent universality of the forms of simplified address to infants. All of this was thrown into question when the results of cross-cultural research began to flow in. From the social learning perspective, Catherine Snow (Snow et al. 1979) argued vigorously that "evidence from cultures within which maternal vocalisation to babies is infrequent should make us cautious about concluding that normal language acquisition requires that mothers talk to infants, play games with them,

comment on objects and events, respond to quasi-communicational infant behaviours, and treat the infants as conversational partners" (287). While agreeing that "language is acquired in the social world and that many aspects of the social world have been absorbed by the child by the time language emerges," Ochs and Shieffelin (1984) point out that in Kaluli and Western Samoan societies, the social world is very different from Western Europe and North America, where most of the original research was done: "the use of eye gaze, vocalization, and body alignment are orchestrated differently" in interactions with infants in these societies (306, 305). In Kaluli society, for example, the mother does not gaze into the baby's eyes as she talks, but faces the baby toward an older sibling, and speaks on the baby's behalf (289). No matter what vocalizations the baby produces, it is apparently not considered to have begun using language until it says "mother" and "breast." In the Samoan culture, the first word spoken is believed to be 'tae' (shit), and prior to the appearance of this word, other words are not treated as meaningful communications (306-7). These practices stand in marked contrast to the modern Western custom of attributing verbal intentionality to all the child's vocalizations, and expanding on their possible meanings.⁵

A good example of the conversational metaphor of early parent-child interaction is provided by Bullowa (1979a, 58-9):

The earliest extra-uterine communication ... when mothers are given access to their newborn in defiance of long established hospital practice, is entirely about itself-- about the relationship between the I and thou who so recently seemed to have been one. But very soon the baby expresses his ability to communicate about something in addition, so deixis enters the picture. Whether or not reaching and pointing have separate behavioral antecedents, both share the function of specifying a particular something and, unless what is referred to is all or part of the self, this necessarily introduces a third term into the conversation: it now concerns some specified person or thing or action, even if the specification is achieved by extra-linguistic means. As the child enters his language community, he elaborates this specification still further. Once he could refer to only what was immediately present with him and his partner at the time. Now he can, through the use of language, make reference to things, persons, events at a distance in time and space and so extend his conversational capability.

In light of neonatal reaching, and the hypothesis that it can contain an intentional component (Bower et al. 1970a), Bullowa's account of prelinguistic "deixis" provides an impressive correction of exclusively linguistic models of reference. The problem with it is that it risks retroactively projecting the linguistic act of labelling an object back into the infant's more or less exploratory effort to focus a conceptually nonspecific mutual attention. The infant probably does not mean to predicate that "this thing is (unambiguously) x," or to define that "this is the thing I am referring to" when it points or reaches. Nor is the infant trying to be descriptive. Gesturing in the

direction of a thing probably means something more like, "this is what I would like to focus attention on, what do you make of it?" (What the infant "makes" of it can only be communicated by a kind of kinesic osmosis.) When the child enters the language community, such gestures are not so much "elaborated," as Bullowa states, as gradually broken up, abstracted, narrowed down, and verbally adapted to more specific purposes.

Ostensive reference in the simple sense of pointing is probably a precondition for deictic language in the sense that it is hard to imagine being able to say 'this x' or 'that x' if loosely indicating something by gesture in proximal or distal frames of reference were not a part of our repertoire. But the capacity to indicate by gesture is not exclusive to language-using beings, which suggests that it is not strictly-speaking a "precursor" of linguistic deixis. Of course, the analysis of a simple deictic term, such as might accompany an indicative gesture, implies that the linguistic function is actually modelled on the gestural function, and this kind of relationship may hold for many aspects of language. And it is certainly true, as John Lyons (1979) has argued, that deixis is one of the functional forms which offers the best hope of establishing an exophoric anchor for language. One can exemplify at least a part of what one means by physically demonstrating a part of what one is talking about. Unfortunately, as we saw in Chapter Two, philosophers have been arguing about how far

this goes for a long time, without getting very far. It may be that nonverbal 'deixis' (infant gestures such as pointing and reaching) is more like a half-way house between language and nonverbal communication, rather than an epigenetic developmental forerunner of linguistic reference, or a philosophical guarantee of denotative reference.

Bullowa's suggestive vignette of a protolinguistic developmental sequence anchored in reaching and pointing exploits the familiar confusion between indicative gestures and literal reference. In fact, the two are quite different or, as Cox (1986) suggests, "they are complementary but not equivalent": pointing "carries its own message" which is irreducible to literal verbal reference.⁶ It is impossible to achieve literal reference by pointing because unaccompanied pointing cannot specify anything other than the focus of visual perception. It may pack an enormous amount of shared and tacit meaning, but in a verbal context this meaning exceeds or transforms the accompanying words; and without a verbal context, pointing may be evocative-- an important supplement to psychosomatic communication-- but it is never literal.

The link between gesture and language must traverse a profound metabasis. Any pre-verbal child can perform a specification in the sense of singling out something in the sensory field, but not in the sense of defining an object against an indefinite background of verbally-structured concepts. This is where the interesting difference between

preverbal gesture and linguistic utterance lies. Language cannot function properly without destabilizing the interactional frame of reference. Language automatically creates an open range of possible perspectives by overriding the sensory setting of the interlocutors and their bodies. It does not simply sketch an imaginary setting in advance, the way a child's game may map a larger symbolic field, beyond the scope of the immediate situation. It activates a logically infinite field. Within the chronically "underdetermined" flow of abstract elements which developed human language puts into play, deictic markers serve, on a more or less ad hoc basis, to establish the referential contours of an ongoing locution. Linguistic deixis is something that arises specifically out of the structural possibilities of early language use, and not simply from the refinement of gestures or the experience of mutually focussing attention. In the context of interpersonal communication, it makes possible quite different ways of establishing parameters or "context," and entirely new requirements of precision. It is undoubtedly to the latter feature of language that Piaget refers when he writes of the "semiotic function." But this developmental transformation does not lie in a sudden "decentering" of the child's perspective-- a brand new recognition that other people have different points of view; it has more to do with the gradual discovery (or cognitive activation) of a whole new set of communicative forms and 'rules'.

As we have already seen, the child is not strictly egocentric; children are aware of the existence of other points of view, although they may have difficulty representing them. But the child is certainly child-centered; it naturally uses its own body as a reference point, like any adult, to orient itself in the perceptual field (Cox, 87; Butterworth 1987).⁷ The idea of "this as opposed to that" is certainly available to the nine month old child who chooses aggressively from a range of proffered objects, just as may be an understanding of something being 'nearer' or 'farther,' something being 'behind' or 'in front of' something else, or 'here' rather than 'there.' All these perspectival characteristics are perceived as features of the immediate context, which usually consists of sensory-affective bodies in a larger physical space. They do not belong to, or foreshadow, the verbal dimension, and they are not instantiations of the general categories that organized linguistic competence puts into play. The fact that deictic "concepts" (e.g., locatives and indicatives) are cognitively implicit in the child's perception and manipulation of the environment, and expressible by nonverbal means, does not make them precursors of relational syntactic functions, any more than the perceptual discrimination of discrete objects is a precursor of nouns. When infants choose a toy, they are not performing an ostensive specification, because they are not using an apparatus designed to isolate instances of a class, or to distinguish between classes. In fact, it is

likely that even when adults use this apparatus in ordinary language, they are probably more often doing something like what the child does with few or no words, and only occasionally mobilizing the conceptual and logical machinery of grammatical structure for purposes of 'predication,' 'reference,' 'definition,' and so on.⁸

The "language" of the baby's body is not best understood as something that dimly foreshadows the purposes of words, even when such foreshadowing seems obvious. The use of terms like 'deixis,' 'interrogative,' or 'directive,' in the theorization of infant communication can be misleading, even when they are qualified by the prefix 'proto.' It obscures the probability that infants do not function in the taxonomically precise ways that language use requires and linguistic analysis affords. When an infant looks to see if the adult will approve of something it is about to do, or to invite the adult to follow along, it is not "formulating a statement in the interrogative mode." It is acting out its understanding and feeling about a situation. The facial expression (expectant) and vocal inflection (rising pitch) embodying the infant's "statement" will, of course, carry over into later verbal construction of questions. But before this can be done, the situation as a whole will have to be scanned carefully by the language user who wants to parse it into appropriate linguistic formulations. It is not always obvious how one distinguishes between surprise and uncertainty and concern,

for example, as possible interpretations of what an infant is putting into play. By the same token, the quizzical situation the infant creates will contain myriad implicit or potential "interrogatives." Are you there? What are you thinking? Are you paying attention? What am I thinking? Am I paying attention? Where am I going? May I go there? Will you come too? Will you let me go by myself? Do I want to do this? Do you think I can do this? What am I doing? Unlike the interrogative, the baby's body inflects the whole situation it is in. A linguistic question accomplishes something more specific, more strategic and measured. Of course, language may also be used to "throw a whole situation into question," as it were; but that is what the child does without the rules of syntax, it is not something that foreshadows language, or that is added on or made possible by language alone.

Some of the confusion arises from our uncertainty about what is language and what is not. For example, Bruner (1983, 73) notes that in one study, "a baby was more likely to change the focus of her attention to the object that her mother was holding when the mother spoke with a rising intonation pattern." He describes this as an "undifferentiated deictic cue." The implication is that, since the mother is a language user, this is a part of the linguistic apparel which she imparts to her child. According to Bruner (69), infants "begin redirecting their attention in response to subtle conventional cues that are

features of adult language, such as characteristic upward changes in intonation. The putative referential system... shifts very easily from 'natural' to 'conventional' cues." This sounds reasonable enough, but is rising intonation really a "feature" of adult language, as Bruner states? Or is it more appropriately described as a feature of higher mammalian vocalization? The skeptic might ask: of which verbal form is an infant's rising intonation a "precursor": request? interest? surprise? pleasure? And are the latter really "forms" of language? On Bruner's view, preverbal transactions, such as infant proto "reference" and "requesting," or games like peekaboo and hide and seek, are language-like because they possess a "deep structure," or "form" which "is detachable from early context." But it is just as plausible to reverse this formulation, and to speak of linguistic structures as "interaction-like," or as being "like" nonverbal communication in certain crucial respects. "Deep structure," if it exists, is hardly an exclusive property of language, as Bruner himself shows (cf. Lakoff 1978).

The problem of deixis in particular is an interesting one because, as Lyons (1979) has pointed out, if it is defined in a rigorously infralinguistic way, independently of any reference to a nonverbal domain, it comes to resemble the problem of anaphora, or the substitution of words for other words or groups of words. On the other hand, if deixis is rigorously contrasted with anaphora, it begins to

sound like extralinguistic indication, which occurs in many a languageless species. The status of personal pronouns is especially interesting in this regard. For example, Lyons (1977) has managed to construct "a sociolinguistically plausible language-system... lacking personal pronouns."

But he comments:

It is tempting for logicians, and linguists making use of formal logic in the analysis of natural languages, to begin by attempting to eliminate from their representation of the meaning of the sentences... all the deictic features which make the truth-value of the propositions expressed... dependent upon the context-of-utterance... [such as] person deixis....

[But] it is difficult to escape the conclusion that person-deixis... is something that cannot be analysed away in terms of anything else. Deixis, in general, sets limits upon the possibility of decontextualization; and person-deixis, like certain kinds of modality, introduces an ineradicable subjectivity into the semantic structure of natural languages (643-4, 646).

In a study of the acquisition of deictic language, Tanz defines "fully fledged reference" as "the liberation of the name from the requirement that its referent be present" (6). She distinguishes between the "symbolic," or purely verbal use of deictic terms, and their indexical use which is really a carry over from pointing, as Bullowa suggested. According to Tanz, "new forms [words] first express old functions [gestures]" (4). The purely linguistic potential of the newly acquired deictic forms (e.g., 'this' and 'that') is not at first exploited by the child; the form emerges initially as a kind of redundant supplement to nonverbal

gesture. Only gradually is it "[liberated] from the requirement that its referent be present." The interesting thing about this way of conceiving the steps for learning new verbal forms such as deixis is that it is formulated from the point of view of autonomous linguistic functioning: complete decontextualization. It is as if the child's achievement of proper deictic usage were a matter of successive approximations of purely infralinguistic forms like anaphoric reference.

Tanz simplifies her argument with the premise that the preverbal child, by virtue of the absence of language and representation, is locked into a proximate world centred rigidly on itself (7f.). It is a short step from this assumption to the hypothesis that it is language which frees the child from its egocentric point of view (161-63). It then becomes possible to make two kinds of argument about the relationship between language and the decentration of perspective: either that the "ability to adopt a point of view other than one's own" must be dependent on the achievement of higher forms of verbal reference; or alternatively, that correct linguistic performance must reflect the achievement of discovering the other's point of view. Not surprisingly, the most widely used illustration of this linkage is the example of the "shifter." All deictic terms are essentially shifters, because they function like temporary place holders in discourse. Personal pronouns like 'I' and 'you' are shifters in the

additional sense that they are exchanged back and forth between participants in conversation, and may be decontextualized further by means of quotation, narrative, and so on. 'I' becomes you, and 'you' becomes 'me.' The fact that children get these forms muddled up, and have difficulty 'shifting' them around appropriately, can then be interpreted as further proof that children are limited to an egocentric perspective in their relations with others.⁹

Although the Piagetian emphasis on sensorimotor (preverbal) development appears to avoid the tendency toward linguistic teleologies in developmental thinking, the sequence from prerepresentational to representational thinking implies strongly, as Tanz's study suggests, that the ability to function freely with the undertermination¹⁰ of linguistic combinations, such as those which involve the use of shifters, is the cognitive basis of perspectival relativity and therefore of empathy. The implicit assumption seems to be that what the child does with non-language must be interpreted in the light of the subsequent technical mastery of language.¹¹ However, there is no conclusive evidence of a causal relationship between the ability to empathize and the ability to manipulate language effectively, or between the ability to use shifters properly and the capacity to see the other's point of view.

From the perspective of symbolic process, there are several reasons why the conditions of formal substitutability achieved in logico-linguistic structures

should not be confused with the sensory-affective object experience which forms the matrix of psychic life. The capacity for projection, introjection (or, through elaboration, for empathy) is not synonymous with the ability to "decenter" oneself in a field of verbal abstraction. The contrast between "taking the other's point of view" in the sensory-somatic symbolic sense and decentering in the verbal sense can be illustrated in terms of the analogy of information theory. Systems of information are put together in such a way that potential semantic yield should increase with unpredictability: when a message is on the way, the less one can say about it in advance, the better. "Entropy" in this paradigm is a measure of information to the extent that a measure of uncertainty is also a measure of potential information. Meaning thus has to do with the promise of determinacy latent in procedures of analysis. One discrete message emanating from an undifferentiated conglomeration of many possible messages bears a very high quantity of information. From this point of view, value lies in the possibility of narrowing down the alternatives, determining the relations of sets and their members, distinguishing types from tokens, and so on.

From the point of view of symbolization, however, abstract uncertainty correlates with disembodiment and the loss of meaning. Preverbal symbolization does not depend on the referential specification of discrete signals or signs. It is not, in that sense, an information system. It depends

on "knowing" something in advance about the self and other-- or at least assuming it. The more one "knows" about oneself and the other, the more one is able to "take the other's point of view," and the richer is the symbolic yield. One cannot get inside another's body unless one has a body of one's own, and one cannot share another's point of view without having one too. Thus, the logical infinity implied in the undertermination of linguistic form is in a way the contrary of empathy. To be "decentered" logico-linguistically is to approach omphalic status in the abstract universe of all possible messages. In this condition, otherness disappears in a calculus of probabilities. There is the possibility of being suspended in a state of formal undecidability, an abstract condition which Derrida has tried to replicate in some of his writings. On the other hand, to be decentered symbolically is to be like an infant, to be exquisitely sensitive to the situation that one is actually in.

It is well known that children first learning language tend to use proper names rather than personal pronouns such as 'I' and 'you.' The reason for this is presumably that the child feels more comfortable using a name that sticks, no matter who is speaking, as opposed to "shifters," which slide around, depending on the speaker ('I' becomes 'you' and vice versa). Whether the child avoids the use of shifters because the child is "egocentric" in the Piagetian sense (Tanz, 15; 49ff.), or because it feels insecure about

getting things right, there is no doubt that as soon as the child begins to use the shifters correctly, it has learned something specifically about and of language for which there is no "precursor" in infant communication (except, perhaps, the affectomotor experience of chaos or helplessness, which the formal possibilities of language may seem, when they are understood for the first time, to threaten to revive once again). What the child learns when it grasps how to use a shifter correctly is that certain names, at least, change their meaning or their referent according to the way that they are used. In the case of personal pronouns, this means that the child learns that the first person is always used by the one who happens to be speaking, no matter who it is, and that the self becomes 'you' when the other has the floor. In this respect, shifters are like dogs which have been trained to obey only the person who is holding the leash-- they have no real loyalty. Grasping the way they work does not mean discovering for the first time that the other person has a different point of view from oneself. Nor does it mean realizing for the first time that there are relative positions of power within an interaction (cf. Urwin 1984). It does mean, however, learning a linguistic convention, and learning how to use it, which is no easy task. Among other things, the child must accept that the manipulation of conventional abstractions is benign, a destruction of the bodily order which is only "fictional." Turn-taking in mother-infant interaction, perspective role-

taking, joint visual attention, and the like, are not precursors of this, because they do not involve a formal substitution process. Although the preverbal or protoverbal games which children play with adults have conventional components, as Bruner points out, it is important to remember that a different kind of relationship is involved: the child does not "agree" to rotate shifters properly in the way that children agree to take turns handling an object. Nonverbal dyadic interaction in infancy does not involve regulation by an abstract principle or explicit code, or reference to anything logically external to the immediate sensory situation. The correct use of shifters does require this, because it is a rule about using language which can only be acquired through language, and explicated, anaphorically, through language. You cannot teach deixis by pointing.

And you cannot learn empathic awareness of others through language immersion or through development of the capacity for accurate representations of the external world. Awareness of others is much cruder than this. It depends on primitive, epistemologically suspect symbolic organizations of the sensory-affective experience of the world, unaided by linguistic specifications and logical clarifications. To be aware of another is to have an inside, and therefore an outside, which entails other insides, and the outsideness of one's own inside. There is nothing formalizable or especially intelligent about being "decentered" in this way.

One is not required to produce "representations" of self and others, or of others' points of view, or even of one's own; one only has to be able to experience how one feels and to sense the psychic activity in others. Yet the consequences of this development are much more drastic than the acquisition of language, or the ability to draw three mountains as if they were seen from the other side of the room. The distinction between inside and outside is a slippery slope that is impossible to get off. In order to get on the slope in the first place, all you have to have is a pretty good set of senses functioning more or less together, a fair information processing capacity, an object-seeking drive accompanied by a reasonably varied repertoire of affect, an imagination, and a few weeks' or months' experience learning on the job. Once you are on it, you slide quickly into a situation that is difficult to keep in perspective. The whole symbolic universe of human intercourse breaks open. It does not all flood in at once, but it is set in motion, and never stops.

Notes to Chapter Nine

1. For a useful survey of developments and problems in the field of child language research since the Chomskian revolution, see Elizabeth Bates et al. (1982).

2. Bruner (1983, 119-20) states that "whether human beings are lightly or heavily armored with innate capacities for lexico-grammatical usage, they still have to learn how to use language. That cannot be learned in vitro.... Infants learning language are not academic grammarians inferring rules abstractly and independently of use."

3. See, for example, Bickerton. See also Wolff (1967), who states (301) that "...neither an environmentalist conception of imitation and conditioning, nor an apriorist conception of inborn faculties, conforms to the facts of language learning."

4. In fact, the overall effect of this debate may have been quite salutary-- a blurring of the ideological maginot lines between psychological schools, particularly the one between the classical conditioning paradigm and cognitive psychology. Rovee-Collier (1986) provides a detailed commentary on the adjustments of classical psychological research paradigms, and their potential convergence in infant research.

5. Bates et al. (1982) review the evidence for causal effect on language development of: 1) quality of attachment; 2) quantities of harmonious nonverbal interaction, and 3) amount of verbal interaction with or input from the child's environment. They find the results for 1) and 2) "are extremely disappointing for social-causal theorists" (23; cf. Lamb et al., 93-97). On the other hand, the evidence that "more language input from adults is related to more and better language in children" (48) is more significant, although the results do not specify any particular kind of language input, such as "motherese" or "baby talk." It appears then that the child's language acquisition is influenced by the language environment, but not very much by anything within the normal range of variation in the child's interactive experience with the environment, such as face to face communication, or games involving pointing, passing objects back and forth, taking turns, and the like.

Bates et al. do point out, however, that the apparent weakness of many of the correlation studies may be related to a "threshold effect," such that "if we focus exclusively on variation in the normal range, we may not detect some critical relationships" (63; cf. Lamb et al.). In other words, let us assume that the optimal range of symbolic experience through attachment, interaction, and verbal "input" in infancy will tend to "result" in (or at least,

not prevent) normal language development. But if higher amounts of these kinds of input have no appreciable effect on normal language development, this will not mean that the relationship between the variables is not an important one, since less than the optimal threshold of symbolic experience in infancy, which may not have been covered in many of the experiments, might correlate with significant deficits in language development. Another way of saying this is that the presence of more or less x may not affect y very much one way or the other; whereas the absence of x may positively inhibit y.

6.Cox (15) also points out that "if gesture is a precursor of language one would expect to see it in decline as language develops," which it does not.

7.According to Butterworth (1987, 78): "Egocentrism is not a retreat into privacy or solipsism but arises because the child falls back on the objectivity of experience, on the externality and shared data of sensory perception, where more abstract means of knowing have failed or are simply not yet available.

"The implication of this analysis is that the phenomena commonly described as 'egocentric' in the literature on children's cognitive development may simply occur because the child relies on the data of unreflective perception where appropriate knowledge is lacking. Although attention may not be directed to the most appropriate aspect of the environment by the naive child, this need not mean that the information obtained through perception is unreliable or that it cannot be communicated. Perception may constitute the most basic of the cognitive processes that contribute to development but it is only egocentric in the limited sense of its point of origin. The information available to the child from a particular position need not be peculiar to that position but may also be available from a variety of other viewpoints. In social situations the child's difficulty may lie in isolating the specific referent of another's attention, among the variety of possible referents, rather than in Piaget's supposition that the child has difficulty in comprehending the possibility of other points of view."

8.Marcel Kinsbourne (Rieber, 1983) goes even further, suggesting that linguistic performance does not necessarily imply that the corresponding level of linguistic competence has been achieved. "The young child is constrained to describe actions in the sequence in which they appear to him to occur (agent-action-object) and other syntactic arrangements are much later to develop. When he speaks using this word order, one cannot assume that he has acquired a linguistic rule. If the child is to use some form such as the passive which infringes the experienced sequence of the action described, then he has to abstract

the words from their referents for purposes of the mental manipulation in conforming with a linguistic rule that he now has acquired.... It is in general only beyond the age of 5 that children are able to map words upon words (mentally manipulate verbal forms as opposed to merely slavishly mapping them on events). Whereas even before that age words are useful as economical codes by which to remember, perhaps only beyond that stage do they become useful instruments for problem-solving in that they are freed for purposes of mental manipulation" (146).

9. It should be mentioned however that Tanz implicitly distinguishes between the developmental concept of 'egocentrism' and the more illusive idea that in early psychological life there is a failure or inability to differentiate the self from the other. (In most of the literature, Piagetian or psychoanalytic, the two are grossly confused.) In her discussion of pronominal reversal in childhood autism (57-60), Tanz points out that the problem may have to do with the shifting quality of pronouns rather than with identity confusion or undifferentiation. However, she also suggests that this cognitive difficulty may be a motivated one, i.e., that the autistic child's misuse of pronouns reflects a more general effort "to achieve sameness and mechanical predictability in the environment" (57). While this hypothesis is plausible, it throws doubt on Tanz's own cognitive-egocentric interpretation of child language. If the improper use of pronouns by autistic children does not necessarily reflect a cognitive deficit, why should it be taken to do so in ordinary children? Tanz's own subtle discussions of the intricacies and inconsistencies of ordinary deictic usage support the alternative hypothesis that the normal child's difficulties arise from the obscurity of the system of rules to be learned rather than from an epistemological limitation of perspective such as Piagetian egocentrism.

10. Here, underdetermination is understood in the sense that there is an unspecifiable number of possible contexts to which any combination of words might relate.

11. The linguistic-developmental teleology latent in Piaget's work is brought out clearly in David Bleich's (1978) theory of symbol formation.

CHAPTER TEN

WHAT IS AN INTERNAL OBJECT?

A curious and paradoxical feature of unconscious fantasy, consistent with the principle of repression in its clinical usage, is that the components of such a fantasy are assumed to be highly organized, yet its leading elements-- gratifications sought after and feared, dangers past and present-- are all dynamically unconscious. Yet the term fantasy seems appropriate to designate a state of affairs that exists only internally, with the person behaving as though he believes it were true....

In this sense, unconscious fantasies induce the creation of symbols. Symbolism would be in the nature of environment made relevant to the coding tendencies of the components of the fantasy. Clearly, the coding and programming activities produced by unconscious fantasy could present a continuing problem for maintaining veridical and accommodative contact with environment.... [Symbolic activity] produces behavior designed to be accurate not in the sense of veridical portrayal of the world by intellectual activity but in the sense of representing an inner world of emotional events (and their representational structure) that is every bit as real as the other (George Klein, 255-6).

One very striking thing about the way that the relationship which human beings have with themselves has changed in recent history-- the last few hundred years at the very most-- is that we "know" so much more about the insides of our bodies. We know from Hartley that the heart is a pump which circulates the life blood, we know something about the brain and the nervous system, the various organs and the reproductive system. Thinking back to the time of

Galen, we cannot help wondering what ordinary people thought about the insides of their bodies. If the average citizen of the modern nation state knows less than his doctor about the positions and functions of the various ducts and canals, walls and masses, which make up his body, citizens of the Roman Empire must have known even less. Yet they were probably just as prone to psychosomatic illness, and just as "perverse" in the way that they manipulated the functioning of their bodies toward psychological ends.

In the present age, we have much more conscious knowledge of how the inside of the human body works; and presumably some of this learning filters down into the unconscious; yet our increased technical knowledge of human biology and physiology is probably still confined, for the most part, to the conscious and preconscious areas of the mind. When we get sick, we are often inclined to relate it to "stress," and even to make vague symbolic links between ideas that we have in the mind and the ways in which our bodies react. And there is an enormous amount of popular literature today which encourages us to think in these terms. But there is no reason to believe that the citizens of the Roman Empire were any less capable of expressing themselves through complex modulations of somatic functioning, involving parts of the physiological interior quite beyond the scope of conscious medical knowledge at the time. Now, if the body functions without medical knowledge, so does the mind-body. This may seem paradoxical or

contradictory to us-- but that is only because we still have a tendency to think of the mind as equivalent to consciousness, and consciousness as somehow distinct from the physical body. We more or less accept that there is an unconscious, it is true, but only on condition that the unconscious be conceived on the model of awareness-- that is, we fill it with representations and images and ideas-- "symbols written in the sand of the flesh"¹-- and then marvel at how these forms of awareness can exist "out of awareness." So we are still attracted to the pre-scientific idea that our psychological interactions with our own bodies must be based on conscious perceptions of the body, and we fail to grasp the implications of the late nineteenth century medico-philosophical principle of the unity of body and mind. We still think of the body as made up of things, and of the mind as made up of representations.

Unfortunately, an explication of "thinking" which fully accounts for the extraordinary organic relation which permits events in the psychological and social domain to exercise an influence on the functioning of precise parts of the physiological interior, such as the colon, the lining of the stomach, the heart muscle, lung tissue, thyroid, or even the bile duct (Money-Kyrle, 422), which may never have been cognized by the "mind," is beyond the scope of this thesis, and is probably as inaccessible today as it was for Freud. (For recent psychoanalytic thinking on psychosomatics, see Lefebvre [1980], McDougall [1986], and Taylor [1987]). The

only reason for raising this problem here is to emphasize the notion that the further we get away from the concept of representations in our thinking about the symbolic process, the closer we are likely to be to an adequate theory of the phenomenon of the psyche, and the further we are along the psychophysical trail that Freud blazed.² (For a contrasting view, emphasizing Freud's linguistically-based mind-body 'dualism', see Forrester [1980]).

The point of the last several chapters has been gradually to suspend belief in the dominant assumption about symbolization in this century, as held in common by most psychoanalysts, psychologists, cultural theorists and social scientists, namely, the assumption that the capacity to symbolize experience is essentially a mental-social artifact brought about or learned by means of the socialization of an initially asymbolic being, the wordless and virtually structureless human infant. The conceptually most consistent and coherently documented articulation of this view is to be found in Piaget's large body of work on cognitive development, which clearly divides human ontogeny into a pre-symbolic, pre-representational phase lasting about two years, and the rest of development, which is a continuous elaboration and refinement of the essential human qualities achieved during the fifth and sixth sensorimotor stages: object permanence, mental representation, and semiotic function. This paradigmatic assumption-- that symbolization is not in itself a primary motive or

characteristic of psychological activity prior to the cognitive period marked by the consolidation of linguistic behaviour-- was powerfully reinforced, if not at least indirectly inspired, by the psychoanalytic, metapsychological argument that object relatedness and object permanence are secondary modifications or socialized derivatives of need-fulfilling and drive-gratifying experiences (an argument which was refined in particular by psychologists interested in the role of conditioning in psycho-social development, such as the learning theorists, e.g., Dollard & Miller 1950).

Loosely speaking, psychoanalysis is concerned with emotional development, and cognitive psychology is concerned with the development of logical thinking; but the two perspectives dovetail neatly with theories of socialization which pivot on the timing of the acquisition of the capacity for linguistic representation; and although neither cognitive psychology nor psychoanalysis was directly concerned in its heyday with the process of socialization itself, together they may be taken to represent the central developmental presuppositions of modern social scientific and cultural thought-- from Talcott Parsons to Michel Foucault, and from Ludwig Wittgenstein to Jacques Derrida.

In Chapters Five and Six, we assumed that symbolization presupposes objects and complex cognitive activities, and tried to show that these prerequisites do not necessarily rule out symbolic activities in infancy. In Chapter Seven,

we did the same thing with the self. We assumed that some sense of self is essential to the symbolic process, but doubted that it can ever be a sense so precise and intellectually coherent that it should be denied to infants, or so vague that it could exist without objects in an asymbolic world of pure physical need. Then, in the last two chapters, we did something slightly different. We took the two commonest criteria of the presence of symbolic process-- the idea of "representation" (of re-producing some aspect of "reality" in a mental form), and the function of language-- and maintained that neither of these indices is synonymous with the concept of meaning or exhaustive of the semantic domain, and that it would be a mistake to peg the human capacity to symbolize experience on prevailing answers to questions about when true linguistic behaviour begins in life, or when 'representations' actually appear in the mind.

All of this has left us with a kind of minimalist image of the symbolic process as an intelligent relationship between two or more physical bodies sensing each other's "internal worlds" and "thinking" about them. This image does not fit at all with the prevailing epistemology of symbolization. The majority view tends to treat psychic processes and psychic contents as separate issues. As we saw in Chapter Eight, the problem of the process, with all of its physicalistic and epistemologically embarrassing implications, is more and more commonly put in brackets, so that the contents of mental life can be analysed separately

for their own peculiar structures and forms. This has led, in some extreme cases, to a kind of hypostatization of the psyche into 'systems' of signifiers or representations, whose mode of functioning sometimes resembles a written text or an abstract model of society, rather than the human body as it is experienced, with its drives, sensations, perceptions, and movements. But even less radical attempts to separate out the proper domain of the psyche rely more and more on broadly linguistic criteria as touchstones of psychological being.

As Pruyser (1983) has pointed out, the perspective of representation is derived from a long tradition of metaphorical reification in which the concepts of 'imagination' and 'mental image' have been reduced to mimetic proportions, such that the mind is conceived, in various ways, as a mental reproduction of the external world (2-6). The representational world is really a storehouse of such reified 'contents': ideas, images, and schemata, measured according to their microcosmic correspondence to reality. Whether this version of the psychological world is conceived along more or less Freudian lines, i.e., as the mental by-product of cthonic forces governed by the pain-reality principle, or whether it is conceived along more contemporary rationalist lines as the result of cognitive developments at the age of two, is immaterial. The contents of the representational world are always more or less strictly separated out from the processes by means of which

they are produced.

The image of the symbolic process as essentially an intelligent relationship between bodies sensing each other's psychic activity does, however, fit, in a loose sort of way, with the Kleinian minority position within psychoanalytic theory. All sorts of things have been said against Kleinian theory: that it is Jungian, because it starts the baby off with innate ideas of the breast and the phallus; that it suffers from an outmoded concept of drives (essentially Freud's); that it is excessively concerned with the death instinct, and exaggerates the role of anxiety or aggression in development; that it overestimates the infant's capacity to formulate and experience conflict. All of these criticisms touch upon real weaknesses in Kleinian theory, but generally they miss the mark; the really basic difference between the Kleinian model and all the other psychoanalytic approaches and schools, including the Lacanian, lies somewhere else. What is unique about Kleinian theory is that it makes no distinction between psychic process and psychic product: a defense is as vivid as a fantasy, for a Kleinian, and a fantasy is not a mental content or a representation: it is the psychic process itself (see Isaacs 1948). For the mainstream psychoanalyst, on the other hand, a fantasy is a by-product of a defence: the process and the product must be carefully differentiated, especially in the clinical situation, where failure to make this kind of distinction can lead to serious

errors and oversights. But Klein was evidently not impressed by the need for clarity-- and since we are less interested here in the clinical applications of theory than in the general insights which alternative conceptions may yield, we shall ignore the issue of Kleinian style and technique. It suffices for the moment to say that, for Klein, the processes of the mind are directly the contents of the mind. In fact, I shall argue that everything that goes on in the internal world, including the action of the drives, is in the nature of a symbolic process.

In spite of their cognate vocabularies, the Kleinian theory of internal objects and the ego psychological theory of the "representational world" are incommensurable (on this point, see Wollheim 1982, esp. 135-6). The representational world belongs to the Western epistemological tradition of phenomenism (empiricism or rationalism), in which cognition is held to be a combination between a dull sense percept, which "belongs to the body," and an animating mental construct, such as a schema, a representation, an image, or an habitual association, which "belongs to the mind." The Kleinian theory of internal objects has very little to say about mental representations in this sense; on the question whether a piece of external reality can be perceived with or without the aid of a corresponding mental object, Klein was largely silent (but see Money-Kyrle 1968). 'Internal objects' are of course related to the problem of perception, but as we have seen, perception nevertheless

seems to be able to take care of itself rather well; it is a biological precondition of psychic life, not something that psychological development eventually permits to happen. The internal object is more directly about something tangential to the ways of cognitive theory: the emotional life of the person.

Now comes an important question: if an internal object in the psychoanalytic-- and especially the Kleinian-- sense is not a quasi-mimetic representation of something in the external world--if it is not assimilable to the models and terms of traditional cognitive psychology-- then what is it? One way of answering this question is to say that an internal object is a metaphor. But there are at least two interpretations of this statement. In the more obvious one, an internal object is a metaphor in the same fashion that a mental schema is a metaphor: it compares something that is supposed to be in the mind to something else-- a schema or an object (but it should be borne in mind that by 'object,' Klein usually means something closer to 'person' than to 'thing'). The more important sense in which I mean this statement is that internal objects actually have some of the properties of metaphors; to put it crudely, an internal object is like a metaphor, because it functions the way a metaphor functions. Or to state the case more conservatively, an internal object behaves more like a metaphor than a representation.

If we are going to people the psyche with

anthropomorphisms, homunculi, and microcosms-- and it is part of the message of this thesis that in the end there is no point in trying not to-- then we would be better off doing it with metaphorical processes than with mimetic representations, and there are good reasons for this. One reason is that the "mechanisms" by which we imagine the internal world being peopled-- "introjection," for example-- are essentially metaphorical in structure. To internalize features of a relation with another person on a more or less permanent basis-- to "introject an object"-- is essentially to give shape to aspects of one's experience in the light of other experiences. That is metaphor. If, in the example of introjection just given, one's experience is the "tenor" of the metaphorical process, then the objectal dimension which is "introjected" serves as the vehicle of the metaphor, in the same way that 'mind' is the tenor and 'cloud' is the vehicle in the sentence 'my mind is a cloud.' Here, the internal dimension is overdetermined by the object. But in "projection," most of the cognitive traffic will be flowing in the other direction: the object will be the tenor, and the psychic state will serve as the vehicle shaping the perception of the object. Or to give another example: I can "identify" with someone in such a way that I begin to sustain toward myself the attitude that the other held toward me. Here, the other becomes the metaphorical vehicle for self perception. But if the attitude I ascribe to the other is actually a projection of my own attitude towards

him, so that I wind up with an attitude towards myself that was originally directed elsewhere, then I have elaborated the process, transforming tenors into vehicles, building metaphors on metaphors-- in this case, I have indulged in what Melanie Klein calls projective identification.

The same kind of point about the way in which the psyche works can be made in terms of Michael Polanyi's (1975) distinction between focal and subsidiary awareness. Polanyi's epistemology boils down to the observation that the whole structure of our explicate order of knowledge, including science, is based on an implicate order of tacit knowledge consisting of skilled practices and perceptions involving direct (inter)action of the body in the world (Ch. 2, 36). This argument is based on the fact that when we focus our attention on an object, the manner of our attention depends on subsidiary awareness of what is going on in our bodies. We locate an object in a specific way because we tacitly perceive and regulate the way in which we are perceiving it. If we shift our attention directly onto the way we are perceiving an object, our perception of the object itself dissolves. But we cannot perceive perception itself. We can have focal awareness of the physiological preconditions of perception, but not of the on going act of perceiving an object (Cf. Merleau Ponty 1945). The act of perception always has what Polanyi calls a "from-to" structure which is irreducible: in other words, perception is always the perception of something in terms of something

else, and this is the basic idea behind metaphor. Cognition involves tacit knowledge of a great variety of enabling and orienting factors which remain in subsidiary awareness, and this immanent character of perception may be taken as the essential quality of psychic activity in general: it is an emergent process, or "transitional phenomenon," as I shall attempt to show in the remaining chapters.

Once the substantive connotations of psychoanalytic terminology are explicated as metaphorical activities, the language of objects and defence mechanisms no longer seems so fanciful. In practice, however, the technical vocabulary of metaphor as it presently exists cannot be adapted to the psyche. There are several reasons for this. There is no doubt that the "cognitive processing," or psychological elaboration (i.e., symbolization) of the experience of the body, of the body in relation to other bodies, and of emotional life generally, is composed of an intricate webbing of metaphoric "operations," and that to describe the semantic tissue of even a simple "internal object" or fantasy or defence fully in literal-minded relational terms would require more effort than it is worth.³ Moreover, the terminology of linguistic analysis in which all the current theories of metaphor are couched is much too formalistic to convey adequately the dynamic qualities of the psychic process. We are still, in many ways, better off with the words Freud chose. After all, everybody knows what libido feels like, even if psychoanalysts cannot explain what it

means, and the phrase "build up of drive tension" is closer to ordinary experience than "a cut in the metonymic chain of signifiers." A defence is not a displacement of an actual object, and there is no reason to interpret it that way; nor is a fantasy a series of pictures unravelling before the mind's eye; and a psychic object is clearly not a thing. Drives, defences, objects and fantasies are all symbolizations-- metaphorical processes-- and phrases like "introjecting an object" are simply a convenient shorthand for indicating the drift of the semantic activity that may be going on.

Another reason why the internal object is better conceived on the analogy of an active metaphor is that the function of the internal object resembles a metaphor in the way that it determines memory.

The mnemonic structure of metaphor has been illuminated in particular by the studies of Verbrugge (1980). In order to grasp Verbrugge's contribution, however, we must pause to consider his rather novel approach to language. Verbrugge has proposed what he describes as a "realist" theory of language, in which "meaning is not a reified entity contained either in words or in people's minds," but a process of "comprehension without representation." This notion of linguistic "comprehension without representation" is constructed somewhat loosely on the model of Gibson's theory of direct perception of invariant structures in the optical array. "The relation of person to environment is

not one of problematic correspondence, but of necessary synergy. Applied to language, this logic argues...that validity in communication is the norm, and that production and comprehension are unmediated by representations" (120).

Verbrugge's ecological analogy probably underestimates the inherent and explicit formalism possible in language communication, and the degree of autonomy and independence of context which linguistic systems of signification are capable of achieving. No matter how unproblematic and non-representational ordinary perception may be, it cannot explain away the need for mediation-- calculated procedures of disambiguation, for example-- in the interpretation of language. Nevertheless, the claim that meaning is "not a formal property of sentences (as isolated objects), but a psychological relation" (92) is certainly applicable to the symbolic (if not the signifying) function of language, and relevant to our conceptualization of the semantic domain, which is by no means exclusively linguistic, but also perceptual, affective, and cognitive. Verbrugge's point, like that of Prusyer, is that imagining is not a representational phenomenon, a static succession of images, but a kind of virtual activation of the body, a "dynamic, borrowing on the rhythm, flow, and juncture of direct perception and action." (93)

With regard to metaphor, Verbrugge emphasizes that the symbolic dimension of language functions through redintegration; that is, words are experienced symbolically

to the extent that they function metonymically as covariants of perception and action, capable of inducing event memories (94), and stimulating virtual or imaginal states which can be elaborated and modulated freely (93f., 113). Language is symbolic because it activates and participates in this kind of "fanciful" process. But if metaphor is taken as the most available general term for this semantically catalytic feature of psychological relationships, including those which bear on language, then it follows that metaphor will always escape definition as a specialized structure, or deviant usage, of language. Moreover, the "meaning" of metaphor can not be established through formalizations "that reduce sentence content to conventional realism" (113). The production of meaning by the substitution of discrete terms, such as the structuralists describe, or the symmetrical comparison of contiguous domains, such as analytic philosophers describe, may be important in the manipulation of formal systems of signification, or in the determination of truth conditions of linguistic utterances, but the kind of combinatorial effect that such explicit techniques produce is tangential to the comprehension of metaphor as a symbolic process.

According to Verbrugge, metaphor is a general cognitive function, intimately related to the specification of patterns and invariants guiding ordinary perception: "metaphor is integral to the development of knowledge, and fancy plays a crucial role in the process" (96). Based on

his statistical studies of comprehension, Verbrugge goes on to argue that the effective relationship between the "topic" (tenor) and the vehicle of the metaphor is best described as a dynamic of "filtering" and "transformation," especially when the relationship between the vehicle and the topic approaches some degree of condensation (topic and vehicle imagined as a dual unity). Verbrugge's results suggest that transformative condensation is a much more prominent feature of metaphoric activity than substitution or comparison, the traditional models of metaphoric signification.

...the substitution and comparison views treat metaphor as an arbitrary or ambiguous substitute for a hidden meaning; each view postulates special mechanisms for reconstructing the underlying conventional meaning. In contrast, the transformation view treats meaning as a property of a psychological relation, not of linguistic forms (whether surface or deep), and it argues that this relation can be specific and precise when the full context of ecological support is considered....The transformation is catalyzed by (not represented by) linguistic forms, which both initiate and constrain the redintegrative process (120-1).

These findings complement the psychoanalytic theory of internal objects sketched above: object relational terms such as introjection, projection, identification, and the like, refer in practice to affectively modulated, often overdetermined, cognitive processes; like metaphors, they have the effect of filtering and transforming experience by relativizing perceptually specified dimensions of the body-world relationship and condensing them into various states

of fused multiplicity, many of which acquire an abiding character in psychological life. Now, such states do not have the status of fixed objects; they are really on going processes (although they frequently have an object-like quality), and might just as well be described as "forms" of symbolization, if by form we do not intend to exclude the idea of dynamic continuity. However, this idea of 'dynamic form' (Langer, 1957) is difficult to explicate in the terms of representation theory, or its successor, linguistic philosophy. It has often been observed, for example, that persons have "characteristic defences." Yet the only way to paraphrase such an observation-- to attempt an explanatory description of the phenomenon-- is to mix terms for process and product, form and content, vehicle and topic, as if their meanings "belong" to the same "logical levels". In doing so, however, we arrive at bizarre formulations such as the psychoanalytic language of the internal world, Freud's concept of the repetition compulsion, and sentences like: 'This person exists in a permanent state of projection.' The phrase "cognitive style" is another, more anemic way of trying to convey the same sort of tacit knowledge of the psyche. The fact that a certain amount of unspectacular attunement to another person normally permits us, however unconsciously, to link together by analogy a whole range of the things he or she says and does, as if they were all mimetic representations or expressive repetitions of some one thing or event, is an illustration of the fact that

"content" (or representation) in the psyche is a form of turbulent activity, and that "form" (or process) is a substantial, almost sensory, content of the mind. The psyche, in other words, is a "category mistake."⁴

Verbrugge's evidence for novel perception through filtering and transformation of topic by vehicle was derived not only from the immediate associations of his subjects to the metaphors he presented them, but also from the redintegrative process through which they were able to recall the metaphors they had encountered earlier. This brings us back to the question of how memory serves the infant. We have already touched upon Daniel Stern's discussion, which emphasizes in particular the importance of episodic memory (94-99). The thing about an episode is that it is a structured unfolding in time, and the experience of an episode involves the integrated functioning of capacities for perception, action, emotion, and cognition, even if they are at odds with each other at some other level. It is possible to remember all sorts of things in isolation, but one never remembers a pure drive experience or a pure perception: there is always a cognitive assessment (even if it is only to note that 'something' is going on), a body activity (even if it is only to remain still), and a feeling (even if it is only a feeling of detached interest). The elements and attributes of episodic events are necessarily experienced in a condensed fashion, and presumably stored that way as well.

It would be interesting to speculate about the analytic (as opposed to synthetic) phase of this process. How is an experience broken down into 'parts' which can be recalled separately from each other? Redintegration involves the recall of psychologically integrated experiences, but the mechanism is a sort of part to whole transition. This implies that memory functions by means of fusions which do not obliterate individual differences, since otherwise the associative recognition of the part would be impossible--the integrated memory could only be experienced internally through external repetition of the global event. The latter is not the case, and so it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that metaphorical structuring is essential to the memory process; and that it is by means of the metaphorical links that an experience hangs together as an integrated memory. But this does not mean that experience is lived as meaningful, and that memories can be revived, only because the mind has acquired an intellectual form which it has subsequently imposed on the otherwise inchoate and uncoordinated experience of the body. The sophisticated formal constructions of metaphorical signification, derived from the logical analysis of language, are not prerequisites of intelligent experience. The fact that memory is based on structured and transformed experience means simply that the human body is a metaphoric instrument, and that that is the way the body experiences the world.

Stern points out that episodic memory in infancy is

likely to be based on the repetition of certain event structures, such as the feeding experience, holding, changing of nappies, and the like. The consistent features of these episodes will tend to become generalized, and thus become part of the background of experience, which is tantamount to saying that they merge asymptotically with what is becoming a sort of continuous self experience.

According to Stern,

The generalized episode is not a specific memory. It does not describe an event that actually ever happened exactly that way. It contains multiple specific memories, but as a structure it is closer to an abstract representation, as that term is used clinically. It is a structure about the likely course of events, based on average experiences (97).

Stern links such structures to the development of the self by means of experiences of interpersonal interaction which, when generalized mnemonically, he terms RIGs (representations of interactions which have been generalized) (97-8). These RIGs "constitute a basic unit for the representation of the core self;" and they gradually coalesce into the sense of core self by means of "the dynamic nature of episodic memory using RIGs as a basic memory unit" (98).

We can now begin to think of internal objects essentially as if they were these RIGs, with one proviso: that the condensing and structuring activities of perception and memory are understood as metaphorizing processes, rather than mimetic "representations;" it is, after all, the

activity of filtering events, linking them together, and transforming them in terms of each other, that constitutes the core sense of self, and not the redintegrative mimesis which emerges in relation to subsequent experience, only to be reabsorbed again into the dynamic symbolizing process.

As Stern explains:

The advantage of an episodic memory system...is that it permits the indexing and reindexing and the organizing and reorganizing of memorial events about self-invariants (or other invariants) in a fluid and dynamic fashion. It allows one to imagine attributes of many different kinds, interrelating in different ways and resulting in a growing and integrating network of organized self-experience (98-9).

In fact, the RIG concept highlights an important contribution of the internal object to the sense of self, namely that it is consolidated around the affective component of recall. The cognitive-analytic dimension of memory which takes the form 'I remember x' is less important than the cognitive-affective dimension, which takes the form 'I remember that x happened in this way.' Reproductive memory plays only a secondary role in formative psychic process. What is more important is the memory of events, in other words, the way in which the experience of events is retained, and this implies metaphoric structuring, since the memory of an event as a whole is necessarily processual: it cannot be a summation of facts represented in the mind; it has to be a synthetic selection, or filtering. This filtering has the cognitive structure of "interaction" or

"transformation," as described in Verbrugge's theory of the interrelation between topic and vehicle in the metaphoric process.

The importance of event memory for psychological being is stressed in particular by Wollheim (1984), who points out three features of event memory as an essential dimension of the internal world. Event memory is not only affective, it is forwardly directed, and it is creative. That is, i) we cannot remember psychically without being emotional about it; ii) psychic memory is bi-directional (it not only retains the past, it influences the future); and most importantly, iii) the way in which psychic memory binds together is not the same as the way in which members of a class or set belong together. In order to understand Wollheim's argument, it is necessary to enter into a rather abstruse philosophical debate about whether the life of a human organism can legitimately be conceived as a unity. Wollheim is not concerned to show that the mind is all of a piece, or that the self is identical to itself, but that the concept of a life implies a unity relation. The self may be all in bits and pieces, the mind may be divided from itself, but the grounds for such heteronomy lie in the overall cohesiveness of a particular life experience, as it unfolds and builds on itself in special ways. This is an organismic fact, not a proposition about the nature of mentality. Again, the aspect of event memory in question is not a representation of the past, but an emotive factor in shaping

the future. For this reason, the statement that two events belong to the same life cannot be a neutral description of fact, because it presupposes the very process by which the two events become linked in the first place. The relation which characterizes a life as a unity by joining together the events which make it up cannot be grasped by an "indicative criterion" (i.e., 'it has been observed that' such and such events occurred in the same life). It can only be determined through what Wollheim calls the "creative criterion" of "appealing to the process" itself, the linking together of the events as such in the making of a life. But this rather tautological notion of the creative criterion is nothing other than cognition through metaphoric activity, or in other words, the elaboration of an internal world: the symbolic process.

At this point, it is important to make it clear that metaphor is not essentially a linguistic activity.⁵ When we say that something is like something else ('x is like y,' a simile), we do nothing special or out of the ordinary with words (assuming that we have got the hang of language). We simply say that something is like something else, and that is what the words signify. The audience of the simile may respond in a variety of ways. One person may say it is not true: 'x is not like y'; another may wonder in what ways x is like y, and whether any of them are interesting enough to pursue, as the producer of the simile seemed to be suggesting. A third may be bored and indifferent. But all

will have understood the whole linguistic meaning of the statement 'x is like y' right away, and whether or not they subsequently give it further thought. In using a simile, we do not specify what it is about the two things that is similar, and we do not intend to. If we did specify what the similarity is (by following up the comparison with a list, for example, of possible candidates, and then narrowing it down to the one property in common that we felt was the "meaning" of the simile) we would be doing something entirely different with words -- something with quite another purpose and effect than a plain simile. True, we might be 'defining' what we mean by the statement 'x is like y;' but in these additional statements about the simile, or about our intentions in making the simile, we would not be stating the "real," "hidden," "figurative," or "deep" linguistic signification of the statement 'x is like y;' we would be stating the linguistic signification of these additional utterances. We can say all kinds of new and wonderful things about the simile, but nothing we will ever say about it will amount to a description of the semantic "structure" of the language of the simile on its own which would allow us to predict what anyone will think afterwards about it, or prescribe what its figurative meaning, its meaning apart from 'x is like y,' really is.

This argument should not be taken to suggest that the simile lacks figurative meaning, or that figurative meanings in general are an illusion. On the contrary, it should be

taken to suggest rather that linguistic theories of figurative meaning are an illusion-- that on the level of language all by itself (the analysis of a group of words such as 'x is like y', for example), the only kind of meaning that can be specified, insisted upon, structuralized, formalized, deduced according to rules, etc., is "literal" meaning: 'x is like y.'

As Donald Davidson (1984) points out, what is true regarding the ordinariness of the linguistic meaning of similes is also true of metaphors in the strict sense-- that is, statements of the form, 'x is y'. The linguistic meaning of the statement, 'the hands are connotations of the id' is that the hands are connotations of the id. There is nothing more that can be done with this statement linguistically. From the point of view of what the words in the statement "mean" (which, as Davidson points out, is different from the point of view of what we might do with the same words), we can apply something like Tarski's truth formula, such that "'the hands are connotations of the id' if and only if the hands are connotations of the id."⁶ We may then rightly conclude that the meaning is actually 'the hands are connotations of the id,' and determine this meaning to be false, or perhaps simply obscure and unverifiable. And leave it at that. For that is the end of the linguistic story. On the other hand, as Verbrugge points out, we may imagine all sorts of things-- we may think of the topic ('hands') as fused and transformed by the

counterpart, even if-- and perhaps especially when-- the internal value of the object is evaded or denied. Now, what Daniel Stern calls the emergent self (which is perhaps not so generally confined to early infancy as developmental perspectives assume), is emergent precisely because it is organized around these internal counterparts, which Klein called 'internal objects.' Internal objects are not substances, as G.H. Mead would have pointed out; they are processes. To use a spatial analogy, they are satellites with which the emergent self is continually interacting, whether or not the external counterparts are present. Everyone who has a social life knows that this is an entirely routine and inevitable state of psychic affairs. But the internal counterparts-- the metaphorically constructed 'shapes' or dispositions-- of one's interactive or social environment, are not precisely 'parts' of the self, in the sense of being the seats of feeling, experience, desire, and cognition; collectively, they are more like a personified setting where the self is extended through action, actual, potential, or imagined, in keeping with the dramatist's device of animistically projecting the character's caste of mind onto the arrangement of the stage, or the poet's predilection for the "pathetic fallacy," in which nature is made to correspond with feeling in a "forest of symbols."

The usual way of depicting the difference between internal objects and the self is to rank them on a

metaphorical meanings and processes are no more formal linguistic entities than are internal objects. Metaphor-- and the semantic domain generally--is not part of an explicate order, such as language is supposed to be. It is "internal" or "implicate," and this allows us to suggest further, without being too frivolous, that just as the internal object can be understood as a metaphorizing activity, so metaphors in turn can be considered as internal objects. An internal object implies a relatively stable semantic configuration-- an abiding meaning which is experienced as an aspect of the self-- but so does a metaphor. A metaphor sets up a relatively stable semantic configuration, but this configuration is both achieved and then sustained by a semantic process-- and the same is true of the internal object. We might therefore say that the internal world is a process which achieves and sustains relatively stable configurations of meaning, and that internal objects are metaphorizations-- but not representations-- of experience.

Internal Objects

What has to happen when someone dies, or seems to leave on a permanent basis, or ceases to comply in a relationship upon which the psyche has come to depend, is that the corresponding internal object has to be redefined. Every external object has an internal counterpart, and every important external object has an important internal

vehicle ('connotations of the id'), and "extend" the linguistic meaning of the statement into a symbolic complex of truly elaborate proportions. But when we do this, we are not "discovering" the "hidden" or "metaphorical" or "figurative" meaning of the statement -- in the sense of following some linguistic rule or obeying some linguistic convention or tapping some deep linguistic structure which is peculiar to metaphors; we are simply creating meanings by means of symbolic processes guided by a group of words whose linguistic signification we understood more or less immediately by receiving them 'literally' (depending on our familiarity with English grammar and the meaning of the words-- perhaps we might have had to look up 'id' in the dictionary, or acquaint ourselves with Freud)-- a group of words which we had adopted, in effect, as the initial condition for further reflective activity. The further activities themselves may or may not involve words, grammar, and signification. To recapitulate: linguistic meaning (signification)-- in the sense of something that perhaps can be determined and explained in formal terms by the science of linguistics or the philosophy of language-- is one thing, namely, "literal" meaning; and metaphor and semantics are another.

Earlier in this chapter, we explored the idea that the "internal object" is a metaphor (in the fuller sense of a process of symbolization); and we have seen how this statement might, so to speak, be taken literally, since

developmental scale graduating from incorporation to identification. Incorporation does not necessarily require the perception of an object by a self. Psychic incorporation connotes a concretistic fantasy of ingestion, something corresponding to the oral stage of libidinal development, whereas identification implies a more measured, but at the same time deeper, relation of unity with discriminated features of the object.⁷ Incorporations are generally thought of as massive, inert, and unintegrated 'introjects,' in contrast to identifications, which are conceived as adaptable contributions to psychic structure, in the sense discussed in Chapter Eight (cf. Abraham & Torok 1968, 1972). (In terms of Piagetian metapsychology, the difference might be stated in terms of the contrast between assimilation and accommodation.⁸) Since internal objects are neither quite so simple as incorporations, nor so refined as to be smoothly integrated into psychic structure and personality, they presumably lie somewhere along the developmental progression from one to the other.

Richard Wollheim (1984) argues, in accordance with a number of psychoanalytic authors, that internal objects presuppose an incorporative or cannibalistic fantasy (121-7). There is no reason to doubt that in many cases, internal objects come by way of oral incorporation, but as a developmental generalization, this point of view suffers from its dependence on a counterfactual assumption: that perception is originally restricted to the mouth, or what

Spitz (1965) called the "primal cavity;" and that oral ingestion is the paradigmatic form of all perception.⁹ It is much more likely that the internal world is an elaboration of many somatic sources, including not only the senses, so far as we have been able to enumerate them, but their complex interrelations and fluctuations. There is no reason to think that looking, hearing, breathing, touching, grasping, recoiling, itching, smelling, or stretching, are less primordial metaphors of mind than swallowing. The fantasy of seeing what one wants probably runs just as deeply in the currents of the internal world as the idea of feeding on it.

The cannibalistic incorporation of an object implies in fact some rudimentary form of the whole cognitive-affective apparatus that metaphorizes experience into memory-- in other words, it presupposes internal objects, and not the other way round. Neither 'cannibalism,' nor the analogy of eating the love object, can have much psychic meaning if they comprise the whole of the activity of the mind. Without some inclination and ability to perceive the object as a cognate being, and without some version of the object within the psyche to be fantasized about, it is impossible for the psyche to construct a metaphor such that the other is swallowed like food. Psychological orality depends upon an operative perspective in excess of the oral cavity: it cannot have psychic status during a time of life when the mouth is the only organ of interaction with the environment,

if such a time exists.

Human interpersonal relations-- even oral incorporative ones-- are impossible unless the interacting bodies set each other up as objects inside, and this is true in more than the trivial sense that the perception of the other requires the innervation of a neural substrate located inside the body. To interact with the other means to elaborate versions of the other on an ongoing basis, to make a model of the other and even to take the other as a model for one's own thoughts. There is nothing spectacular about this, and one does not even have to have a fully developed and stable self in order to accomplish it; it suffices to be an emergent self with an evolving constellation of internal counterparts of the actual environment with which one interacts. Moreover, it matters not in the least how 'representative' these counterparts are. They are just there, carrying on, as aspects of human sociability and intelligence.

The relation with the other must exist 'inside' as an imaginative possibility in order for it to seem to exist externally. The whole panoply of psychological mechanisms psychoanalysis has devised-- introjection, projection, incorporation, identification, repression, sublimation-- presupposes an internal world, a psychic space where objects exist, and the attribution of such spaces to objects in the external world (Wollheim 1982).

This fact is suggested by the way we discriminate

between persons and things. We do so behaviourally. When I suspect that the other is a person, I am observing or projecting the potential for a reciprocal internal relation to me. I do not have to be right in every case in order to have this capacity to relate to other persons. If I pretend to communicate with a tree, or actually believe that I am doing so, it is only because I imagine the tree responding in some way: I set the tree up within me as a being that has an internal relation to me. This does not mean that I am too stupid to be a person, or to recognize others as persons. On the contrary, it means I have the basic concept of the person, and do the sort of thing persons do, even if I am failing in the process to distinguish between fantasy and reality: I experience myself as an internal world breeding internal worlds.

An infant has no other way of guessing the difference between persons and things. The infant does not have representations of the difference between alive and dead, organic and inorganic, mind and matter. These all come later. In the meantime, the baby thinks in terms of experiences like its own. A thing may have an internal world, or it may not. This is why even the baby does not automatically equate movement with aliveness. Aliveness is the baby's experience of its body in the environment, an internal relationship. To be alive is to experience oneself inside something else. If the other responds to me, I take the other as a cognate being, because the other clearly has

an internal relationship to me. In other words, I experience the other experiencing itself inside something else-- namely, myself-- and I cannot help getting entangled in a whole series of reciprocations and interregulations of behaviour. This kind of entrainment does not occur when an infant concentrates on a thing. The baby behaves toward the thing as if the thing does not experience itself inside the baby.

Primary narcissism is therefore not the cognitive absence of a world external to the infant, or the emotional exclusivity of the infant's internal world, but rather the infant's assumption or wish that all imaginable internal worlds consist of internal relationships to itself. In a world in which all other internal worlds are containers for myself, I can still empathize with the object. I can feel sorry for another internal world because I can imagine it experiencing the pain I experience, I can fear it because I can imagine its relation to me being as hateful as mine to it. I can think that my object loves me and needs me inside, as I love it. And I can wonder if I care for the object, or hurt the object, as the object does me. What is narcissistic about me, in this scenario, is not that I am solipsistic, but that I cannot imagine the possibility, or tolerate the growing suspicion, that other internal worlds might be capable of having relations to each other which have no reference whatsoever to me.

The idea that other internal worlds might exist without

me inside them is foreign to my experience, for all the worlds that I encounter at the outset seem to be intertwined and even centered on my own. When I observe internal relationships which appear to exclude me, I grow uneasy. I begin to wonder if I am not forgotten, as I sometimes forget. But my uneasiness is not due to egoism and arrogance. It is just that this whole line of thinking threatens to reverse the order of the symbolic logic I have been applying, which has been the basis of my experience--my emergent self-- so far as I am able to relate to it. I began by organizing myself around the idea of another having experiences like my own of me. I can accomodate several of these alternative internal worlds, so long as they fit into this pattern of confirming my relationship to myself. The internal world breeds internal worlds, and the more I exist for others, the more I exist for myself, so I liberally grant internal worlds to others, perhaps unwisely and incorrectly. But as my ability to identify internal worlds gains in proficiency, I learn to discriminate their ardour. I begin to have experiences in which I am not so much the reason for the interaction between others as the indifferent instrument of it. The problem for me here is not really that others cease to be extensions of me. I am already familiar with my lack of control over others, and though I may not accept this lack of control, the more serious injury to my narcissism is subtler. What worries me is that others seem to lack control over me. On occasion, I feel as if I

am not an extension of them, and this is very unsettling. What is going to hold me together and keep me connected, if not them? The attention which I so automatically receive when other internal worlds are present will sometimes feel hollow and accidental, a whim on their part. It is not just that others come and go, that they are often entirely absent, but that they do so randomly. At times, I have been very well aware how utterly I depend on other internal worlds, but I have comforted myself with the thought these others were invulnerable and omnipotent. Now this seems like folly. Worse, strangers are beginning to frighten me. The reasons for this are obscure. It is probably not the case that strangers have this effect on me simply because I am getting better at differentiating one person from another. It is not as if suddenly, for the first time, I recognize someone other than my mother. I have already been through that, in the last few months, and do not find the uniqueness of my mother so frightening in itself. Perhaps the strangers make me anxious because I am beginning to realize that some of them are experiencing me for the first time.¹⁰

Concluding comments

Since there is nothing inherently representational or linguistic about metaphorical processes and internal objects, and since infants experience drives, sensations, feelings, and emotions, and perceive, recognize, and become

attached to other persons, there is no obvious reason to deny them internal worlds on the grounds that they demonstrate no facility with language and produce no clear evidence of having representations of themselves or others. What one probably can say about the infant's internal world is that its 'semantic configurations' are likely to be much less stable than later, but this is no reason for doubting that the semantic processes are going on in preverbal infancy. The most logical motive for rejecting this possibility outright is presumably to defend a view of mind, symbol, and meaning which is based on a theory of representations or bound ideologically to some version of the language paradigm in epistemology. But this would have the effect of reducing the scope of what we are trying to learn about ourselves to the parameters of an already established, explicate order, and the only point of that would be to formalize what we already know, in order to try to make it consistent with itself. Formalizing what we already know into a consistent and systematic theory is certainly a useful exercise: among other things, it helps to regularize research and practice by introducing a great deal of clarity into the knowledge-producing situation. But, in terms of what can be understood from the point of view of the language paradigm and the philosophy of representations, Hartmann, Piaget, Wittgenstein and their followers have already done a very good job of this, and their efforts have made it clear that what we already know sufficiently to

formalize or structuralize is not enough to understand the symbolic process.

Notes to Chapter Ten

1.Lacan (1966b, 69): "The symptom is here the signifier repressed from the consciousness of the subject. A symbol written in the sand of the flesh and on the veil of Maia, it participates in language by the semantic ambiguity that I have already emphasized in its constitution."

2.Freud, of course, was only the most coherent of those who explored the bodily nature of psychological and social life. He is therefore the one who must be credited with legitimizing it as a problem of knowledge. But, as he himself acknowledged, Freud had plenty of predecessors, including one that he did not himself discuss, namely Friedrich Nietzsche.

3.Marion Milner (1987, 53) makes the related point that internal objects are too complex to be analysed out of existence.

4.Hilary Putnam (1978) asks: "What is the source of the fact that we have knowledge... that cannot be 'scientized--' 'verified' by a verification that publicly conforms to the criteria of 'scientific methodology'? One source is clearly this: that we can acquire skills that are too complex to describe by a theory. I can learn to translate from one language to another. But I cannot describe the skill I have acquired by an (explicit) theory.... The key fact is that skills don't depend on theories.... And knowledge-- even verbalized knowledge can be embodied in a skill and not a theory.

"Ordinary psychological explanations are another example of the same phenomenon. It may be perfectly clear to everyone in a given situation that Jones is jealous.... But one couldn't give anything like a 'scientific proof' that Jones is jealous.... The case is like the translation case in that one can't 'verify' Jones is jealous in isolation: one would have to verify a huge 'psychological theory' which covered all the 'special circumstances'. And this, of course, is implicit in our knowledge of people, and our ability to use psychological descriptions-- not something we can state explicitly.... It is a feature of 'scientific' knowledge...that...our theory applies to our measuring instruments, and to their interactions with what they are used to measure, not just to the objects we measure. It is a feature of practical knowledge that we often have to use ourselves (or other people) as the measuring instruments-- and we do not have an explicit theory of these interactions" (71-2).

5.See Verbrugge (1979, 77-84). He points out that metaphoric play in childhood must be distinguished from metalinguistic competence, and that "the study of linguistic metaphor may

have to begin in the turbulent dynamics of children's fantasy" (79).

6. For discussion of this formula, see Davidson (1970).

7. Freud (1921) wrote that, at first, identification "behaves like a derivative of the first, oral phase of the organization of the libido, in which the object that we long for and prize is assimilated by eating and is in that way annihilated as such. The cannibal, as we know... has a devouring affection for his enemies and only devours people of whom he is fond" (105). For a critical review of the concepts of incorporation, introjection, identification and internalization, see Compton (1985).

8. Cf. G. Klein's theory of repression as a form of assimilation without accomodation (244-245). The idea is that the repressed (and repetitive) contents of the dynamic unconscious act like closed circuits, or in other words, like schemata which are resistant to feedback, and therefore to learning as well.

9. The idea that the internal world is an elaboration of a single instinctual relation to the environment-- sucking and swallowing-- is more of a theoretical convenience than a truth. The principle of parsimony is an occupational hazard of developmental psychology and social theory generally. Most explanations framed in terms of unitary origins turn out, in the long run, to be false economies, requiring expensive metatheoretical machines to link the disparate phenomena which resist conformity to the model implicit in the originary genetic metaphor.

10. Although stranger anxiety may occur as a reaction to the presence of someone who has visited the child before, this is probably not a response to otherness as such, but to particular qualities of otherness which are less familiar. I am emphasizing the fact that the baby is also a stranger to the stranger, and as the infant's ability to perceive persons develops, it will become aware of this distressing nuance.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LOSS, TIME, AND 'ILLUSION'

Let us in a word become accustomed to
see all things sub specie durationis
(Bergson, 129).

Freud said that the sense of time is an ego function, denied to the "primary process," which knows no principle of contradiction, cannot distinguish between past and present, and is ignorant of the concept of death. Melanie Klein interpreted the primary process unconscious in a slightly different way. For Melanie Klein, psychological time is not, in principle, barred to the unconscious. However, it bears a primordial relation to the emotional experience of loss of a loved and needed object; and the ability to assimilate the fact of loss-- what she called the depressive position-- is certainly a question of psychological maturation, which involves an ego factor, as Freud suggested.

There is probably always, at least in ordinary circumstances, a sufficiently rich sentient experience to stimulate some sense of duration, even in an infant. But the awareness that something is actually past and done with must surely be based on the perception that it is no longer happening. This is another way of saying that the sense of time requires memory. or rather, the ability to distinguish (not necessarily absolutely) between memories and perceptions.¹ It also requires anticipation. As Freud

pointed out, the obvious way to anticipate something is to think about an experience that one would like to have happen again: to remember it vividly and to wish for its recurrence, as in the the case of the hungry baby. (Bion's notion of the 'empty thought,' or 'pre-conception,' of the striving infant, is another, more arcane, model of primary anticipation, involving not memory as such, but an innate, instinctually determined expectation. Money-Kyrle (1961, 46) has advanced a comparable notion of the "primary symbol," based on the ethological concept of innate releasing mechanisms such as those involved in 'imprinting.' For Money-Kyrle, as for Bion, the primary symbol is an orally structured expectation of the breast).

Freud saw the wish (for drive gratification) as the motive for remembering (the hallucination of gratification); but there is no reason to rule out the memory of pleasure itself as a stimulus for wishing. One wants something to happen again because it was gratifying. Thus, while one may wish for gratification in order to quell the pain of hunger, one may also wish for the return of the mother, in order to reexperience the pleasure of her presence. In the latter case, her unavailability develops into a painful experience because of the absence of the associated pleasure, not because there is a physiological sensation which is painful in itself, as in the case of the unavailability of food. Pain may be the motive for the reactive wish that hunger would go away, but in the example of missing someone, it is

the (anticipated) thought of (bygone) pleasure itself which serves as the motive. Thus, the drive for the object is equiprimordially a pleasure-seeking activity, inherently double in its constitution, whereas the aim-governed drive for discharge is essentially about the avoidance of pain, as we saw in Chapter Five.

If we start with a crude opposition between the body in protopsychic states of raw pleasure and pain at one extreme, and the psychesoma as a self appreciating a meaningful object at the other-- but refuse to do what psychoanalysis has traditionally done with this dichotomy, which is to derive one side of it from the other in a developmental sequence-- then we appear to be faced with a metapsychological gap. Until roughly the 1950's, there were two main ways of bridging this apparent gap, both of them developmental and sequential, and both involving the superego. In Freud's version, which was taken up by his daughter and the ego psychologists (and in a slightly different way by the Lacanians, who conceived the superego along the lines of a subject-independent symbolic order of language), the link between the pain-reality principle and the object principle was secured during the Oedipal crisis. The resolution was brought about in an essentially pragmatic fashion when the conflicts between narcissism and a growing capacity for integrated perception of the object (between self-preservation and love), gave way to the formation of the superego through internalization of the object,

identification with the same sex parent, and the foundation of an internal world of representations.

In Klein's alternative version, the superego is active before these questions of sexual differentiation and suitable sexual objects are raised. The fantasied results of the infant's hungry attack on the breast (part object) are incorporated, forming the earliest root of the primitive, persecutory superego (Segal 1964, 4). Thus, as we have seen, the pain-reality principle is in Klein's view intrinsically entangled with object relations, and the fate of the object principle will depend upon whether the balance of forces between 'good' and 'bad' objects is favourable to a successful working through of the depressive position, in spite of the presence from birth of a primitive instinctual constellation (the death instinct) inimical to pleasure in the object. Whereas Freud's superego has more the flavour of a triumph of practicality and the prospect of future gains, Klein's version hints at a moral victory over evil which must be constantly renewed. On one side, reality and pleasure are derivatives of drive frustration and secondary cognitive process; on the other, they are derivatives of primary fear for the self and secondary concern for the object. Freud's pleasure is an overcoming of frustration, whilst Klein's is a kind of residual of constructive goodness. For one, the definition of reality is essentially pragmatic, and for the other, it is essentially moral.

As we saw in Chapter Five, Freudian and Kleinian theory

converge around the metapsychology of pain. Although it would be incorrect to deny that pain can turn into pleasure, and pleasure into pain, there is no good reason to think that one should be derived from the other; or to infer from the phenomenon of the transformation of affect that pleasure and pain-- or for that matter, love and hate-- are mutually exclusive, inversely proportional opposites (cf. G.S. Klein 1976, 210ff., 215). It seems more likely that the prominent hedonic qualities have distinct psychobiological foundations which allow them to coexist in varying degrees of admixture. However, since psychoanalysis has always concentrated on the psyche as a drive-defence construct, it has tended to remain content with the metapsychological coherence of pain theory, and to leave the question of an independent pleasure principle on the side. Nevertheless, there is an argument to be made for the primacy of pleasure-- and for the existence of a pleasure principle irreducible to either the pain-reality principle or the object principle. We have already touched on this possibility in discussing the aesthetic disposition of the infant body. The active pleasure which we have been linking to the object principle cannot derive solely from pleasure which the object provides to the infant (i.e., pleasure in being handled, fed, soothed, which may be split off from frustration); nor is there any reason to presuppose an innate conception of the object which the baby possesses before it interacts with an external object. The primary metapsychological motive of

pleasure may simply be the pleasure in functioning itself. The infant body enjoys the activity of the senses, the fluctuations of feeling, and the perplexities of knowing. It projects its pleasure in its own activities into its perception of the object, and introjects the object's pleasure, especially when the latter is taken in reference to the activities of the self. We may link this conception of pleasure centrally to the psychic process, but in so doing we must emphasize the role of interplay-- of interacting variables rather than opposing forces. We must develop a metapsychological concept of mediation to account for the pleasure which arises from the interaction of the psycho-biological variables, variables the understanding of which traditional metapsychology and academic psychology have tended to straightjacket into developmental sequences, such as that of primary and secondary process, or sensorimotor versus representational thinking.

Frustration, pain, and withdrawal are, of course, inevitable, but the capacity to generate internal pleasure, whatever its evolutionary status, deserves consideration apart from the logic of the pain principle, and even the function of the object. There is at least one sense in which pleasure is ontogenetically primary: if it were not, we would be forced to ask how the psychic process is possible at all. This is exactly the question that Freud posed in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. His intention had always been to establish the premise that innervation and

stimulation are in and of themselves painful, and so he could not help but return periodically to the problem of explaining how the psychic process can ever come to fruition. Since 1895, his thinking had evolved into such a far-reaching interpretation of the pain principle that he was forced (1920) to postulate a kind of cosmic Eros to counterbalance it. But Eros has nothing to do with the pain-reality principle; it is more like a creative lust-- what he described as a desire to "build ever larger unities." So in his darkest moment of theory-construction, Freud implicitly conceded the thesis of an autonomous principle of pleasure.

We may restate the argument in this way: if symbolization, i.e., the psychic process, were nothing more than the sublimatory flight from primary pain-- if biological responsibility for pleasure in experience lay at the doorstep of the pain-reality principle alone-- there could be no organismic gain from thinking, and psychic reality would long ago have slipped into the oblivion anticipated by the death instinct. The same objection can be raised against the Kleinian equation of symbolization with reparation: there is no compelling logic in the view that psychic life sustains itself and grows by transforming the motive of pain into the expiation of guilt.

In practice, pain and pleasure cannot be conceived as mutually exclusive opposites; there is always, as Freud said, a "fusion" of instincts. Perhaps we might say, in

line with currently fashionable terminology, that they are complementary. As activities, pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding actually have an asymmetrical relationship to each other, because the first requires a body experiencing itself simultaneously with an object, in fantasy or reality, as a psychological point of departure, whereas the second starts from an unpleasurable state of a body otherwise indifferent even to itself. But the two conditions are closely interrelated. The anticipation of pleasure leads easily to unpleasant physiological states, which then supplement pleasure-seeking with the goad of pain-avoidance. And the sheer avoidance of pain can, as Freud demonstrated, stimulate the fantasy of a pleasurable object, both mitigating the painful state of the body with memories of pleasure, and powerfully supplementing the motive of "gratification" (i.e., pain-reduction through discharge) with the (memory/) prospect of pleasurable interaction with the object.

It follows from this that the capacity to wait, which is such an important feature of the reality principle as Freud defined it, depends upon the development of the capacity to perceive psychic reality as much or more as it requires a refinement of the capacity to perceive external reality. (This is one reason why too much emphasis on the ego's relation to external reality and on the reality principle can be misleading. It is important to avoid getting caught up in a facile analogy between reality and

'the external world.')

The ability to distinguish between the need to reduce a painful buildup of stimulus, which is a matter of survival and has potentially life-threatening consequences, and the desire to be with an other whose absence is felt as a loss and whose presence is wished for because it is, in some way, a pleasure, is essential. By itself, the perception of the object as a separate external being will have very little influence on one's capacity to wait, or to tolerate the pain of ungratified drives, and will certainly not prevent anyone, no matter how mature in matters of external perception, from fantasizing the presence of a drive-gratifying or pleasure-giving object. The difficult thing to determine is not whether the object is external, but whether memories and fantasies are sufficient to tide one over til the expected return. At the instinctual level, one knows that hunger leads to death and prolonged absence to grief. It is possible to survive grief, but it seems that this has to be learned.

A person can be very practical in avoiding pain-- able to feed, clothe, house, and regulate body and self unassisted-- yet much vexed by the absence of one who exists as a memory of pleasure. If one cannot establish and maintain a clear enough internal distinction between those aspects of psychic reality which have to do with survival and the pain of physiological needs on the one hand, and those which have to do with desire, passion, and love on the other, then it will be doubly difficult to tolerate either

an increase in drive tension on the classical model or the absence of an object whose pleasure is longed for. Every pang of hunger will overlap with the emotional deprivation of the object's absence, and with the efforts to remember the pleasures of presence, in order to fantasize that presence. The effort can become painful enough to distort memory and disrupt fantasy. And the absence of the object of pleasure will tend to be experienced as if it were a life-threatening accretion of painful stimulus. A sober analysis of psychic reality will distinguish these two situations: the anxiety about death-- what Freud described as being "overwhelmed by the demands of the id"-- is different from anxious anticipation of the love object. Obviously the anxiety over the absence of the loved one, the one who gives pleasure in interaction, will be easier to tolerate if it is not equated with the prospect of starvation, loss of protection, annihilation by the elements and the like. Of course, it is probably very difficult for the infant to make this kind of differentiation at the best of times, no matter how good he or she may be at perceiving external reality, because it is primarily a question of the perception of internal reality, which is much more difficult to sort out. So when clinicians talk about a failure of reality testing, they are probably not observing a situation in which the troubled one lacks an ability to differentiate between the inside and the external world, the self and the other, the memory and the reality; they are probably

witnessing an extreme example of the difficulty humans have, at any stage of life, maintaining an emotional distinction between the presence of pain and the absence of pleasure.

Now, whether one takes Freud's pain-drive theory literally as the model of the infant's internal fantasy life, or whether one adds on the idea of wishing for what is pleasurable for its own sake (and thus supplements the aim-governed drive with an object-seeking drive), there is no doubt that in either or both cases, we are talking about a very "primitive" level of symbolization and fantasy production. The "hallucination of gratification" and the compensatory remembrance of pleasure do not in themselves entail the experience of loss. There is no reason to presuppose, with Klein, that the infant is innately pessimistic-- that it automatically expects that what is past is irretrievable, that it shall never again have experiences like the ones it presently misses. Until the past acquires the stamp of finality, the infant will not have absorbed the idea of loss.

When Freud said that the libido becomes attached to an object, he was talking about a disposition which has become established, with respect to a particular person, to apportion a share of attention and feeling toward him or her. This "attachment" refers to a more or less permanent orientation toward the object, a state of availability and openness which has the quality of an incipient action.² The realm of object-related libido is essentially the world of

duration, where intensities and qualities of feeling fluctuate, are distributed and redistributed, where objects come, go, and return. For the moment, we might consider this world of "incipient action" as akin to the 'primary' world of symbolic process, or "primary process." It is not quite the same as Freud's primary process, but it is close: in contrast to Freud's conception, there is a sense of time, and there is a sense of 'death'-- an innate maximal anxiety at the destruction ("annihilation," "fragmentation") of the self. But the past does not have the character of finality which can serve as the medium for the concept of death as an objective fact. Primary process time is circadian, rhythmic, measured in body-object states: an emergent property. It is the time of a being that cannot help itself, whose moments of awareness are unmitigated by the possibility of displacement through effective action. And although this kind of time has a before and an after, it is not an analytic composite, and so not divisible in the same way; it cannot be abstracted and arranged, independently of body states, into an objective past and a planned future. In this sense, it still resembles Freud's theory of what psychic life is like before "time."

When Freud said of the loss of a loved one that mourning ultimately involves the detachment of the libido from the object, I do not think he meant that the object loses all psychological significance, or that the result of successful mourning is the eradication of the lost object

from the internal world, but rather that the quality of incipient action toward that object is gradually dissolved, released from the object-relation, and made available for other uses. According to Freud, this involves a temporary, and perhaps chronic, shift in the balance of psychic forces. In terms of the metapsychological viewpoint outlined above, it involves the dissolution of the pleasure-object structure of motivation, at least with respect to that (lost) object; and institutes a new regime, a regime not only dominated by the pain principle, but deprived of its normal aim: gratification. In effect, the very elaborate, psychologically sophisticated, quintessentially aim-inhibited psychic situation that the reaction to loss actually brings about is similar to the psychodynamic structure which Freud attributed to the most primitive state of the drive-- the hungry baby's hallucinated gratification. The whole mnemonic-metaphoric apparatus of incipient interactivity with the object is (depending upon the ruthlessness of the effects in the rest of the psyche of one's reality assessment), more or less completely dammed up and denied discharge; most or all of the benign and normally routine displacements of expectant energy with respect to the object (play, fantasy, rehearsal, and substitute actions) are discredited, or seem meaningless; and in the resulting state of libidinal frustration, a massive regression to the perceptual end of the psychic spectrum takes place, initiating a panoramic "hypercathexis" of

memories of the object whose intensity overdetermines the experience of "reality" and approximates the "perceptual identity" of Freud's hallucinating infant.

There is a further similarity between the mourner and the hungry baby: both get very angry, although there is no one to get angry with, since the object of the anger is not there.³ The main difference between them lies in the relatively painless naivete with which the baby is classically thought to imagine the absent breast. In the mourner, the awareness of the irretrievability of the lost object creates more than ever a situation in which the pleasure-seeking drive for interaction with the object becomes the psychic equivalent of debilitating physical hunger, where the pain-avoiding drive is thwarted. One might infer from this analogy that the "hallucination of gratification" Freud attributed to the hungry baby is, like the vivid reminiscences of the lost love object, normally bittersweet. Pleasure in the mourner and pleasure in Freud's hungry baby are both compromised. They are wishes drowning in a sea of unpleasurable reality. In these situations, as Freud surmised, the pleasant thoughts are not sufficient unto themselves; they act like secondary effects of the flight from pain. However, this does not confirm that the avoidance structure of the pain-reality principle is the psychological nucleus of the drive, as Freud thought. In both instances of helplessness-- hallucinatory states of object hunger and loss-- the present unpleasure is

cognitively induced. Rather than saying that a painful increase of drive tension has stimulated mentation, we ought to say that reasonably clear thinking has resulted in a painful state of drive tension. A whole psychological latticework of object expectation and incipient action has been undermined by cognition. The link between the anticipatory organization of pleasure and the perceptually-based structures of the psyche-- what Freud called respectively the primary and secondary processes-- has been severed. What is in fact at stake, from a psychodynamic point of view, is not only the problem of how to realize, express and discharge the potential pleasure (e.g., to interact, once again, with the "breast"), but the continuation of the memory of pleasure. The wish to pretend in the pleasure as a way of reducing pain is less fundamental psychologically than the need to preserve the capacity for pleasure itself. In other words, the function of the fantasy of wish-fulfillment is not only that it reduces the psychological pressure of the drive; but also that it tides the psyche over during a process of reorientation, in which there is an attempt to sustain the interplay of psychic functions and to protect the integrity of the drive as an expectation of pleasure.

The question arises of what to do with good memories, now that one is stuck with them internally. Where do they go, if they cannot be elaborated in interaction? Does one try to get rid of them? Does one set up some kind of

alternative interactive world? The answer we have received from both Freud and Klein is that they are displaced through a symbolic elaboration of the body-object state (Klein 1975a, 219ff). This is the essence of the psychoanalytic contribution to our understanding of the symbolic process so far: the idea that the differences between in and out, inside and outside, internal world and external world, self and other, are all derived (as we saw in Chapter Five) from the internal handling of pain.

Even at the most 'primitive' level, there is always a sense of duration, of the "present continuing," and within this present, what will happen exists as an anticipated present, and what has happened continues to happen as a memory still tinged with the quality of incipient action, or "presence." When the "primary process" or "duration" of an object relation begins to lose this psychic quality of incipient action, however, it tends to become "past" in a much more final sense: it remains a memory, but no longer a memory that lives in the form of anticipation. At the most basic level of the symbolic process, the experience of loss is the wearing away or disappearance of the presence of the object, in this sense of the object as a live disposition, a latent gesture, a potential for interaction, within the self.

Now, in principle, any perception of the "external world" can stand as a threat to the psychic action of the "present continuing." The most obvious example of such a threat is the perception that the object is dead, which

really amounts to the cognition that the one to whom we attributed an internal world in which we ourselves had a life-- the basic structure of narcissism as redefined in the previous chapter-- no longer has such a world for us to inhabit. Such a perception threatens to create a "past" out of the ongoing present, to annihilate a whole set of active dispositions, to eradicate an entire range of gestures. An external internal world has been disqualified, and in consequence, the own internal world finds itself on probation. This is why Freud and Klein placed such emphasis on "reality testing" in the experience of grief and mourning. As Freud put it:

Each single one of the memories and situations of expectancy which demonstrate the libido's attachment to the lost object is met by the verdict of reality that the object no longer exists; and the ego, confronted as it were with the question of whether it shall share this fate, is persuaded by the sum of the narcissistic satisfactions it derives from being alive to sever its attachment to the object that has been abolished. (S.E. 14, p.255)

In his discussion of the metapsychology of loss, Freud talked of the transformation of "object libido" back into "narcissistic libido" as a result of the "decathexis" of the object. Without going into the intricacies of this awkward and often disputed terminology, we should note that it conveys a profound insight. Freud said that the dead object is "reinstated" in the ego, by means of identification, thus becoming a part of the self. What Freud recognized was that

the shock and the pain of loss contain the idea of the annihilation of the self, because the disposition of the self has become interdependent with the object. In the internal world, the self lives also in the internal world of the object, and the death of the object fundamentally disrupts the integrity of the internal world, and challenges the tonic reality of the drive. The mourning process is not the detachment of the libido from the object. It is not the means by which the "verdict of reality" is achieved. It is the libido's struggle with this verdict for survival, the painful reaction to the destruction of the object as a focus of incipient action; or if you like, the "narcissistic" resistance to the finality, the abstract or experience-distant discontinuity, of the concept of the 'past.'

Ideally, of course, the latent interpersonal psychic disposition toward the object is gradually relinquished, and the object is retained "metaphorically," as an aspect of the meaning of the self which is fluid and capable of new uses, free of its original organization along the lines of 'expectancy.' This is the psychological truth behind the Kleinian notion that 'meaning is weaning,' that the symbol is a creative substitute for the lost object (Segal 1964, 75). The good memories are retained, but they lose the quality of an anticipated present, for if they continued to dominate the primary process as incipient gestures of the self, they would become sources of bitter longing and paralyzing resentment-- possibly even madness-- in the

continued absence of the 'external' object. Thus, what is important in Freud's understanding of the dynamics of mourning is not so much whether a finite quantity of psychic energy is transferred (the metaphor which has caused the drive theory so much grief in recent years), but the fact that a 'position' in a 'hierarchy' of latent dispositions to action is being threatened, or relinquished under the pressure of loss. The object itself may in the end retain or even increase its standing in another dimension of psychic value; but as the correlate of an ongoing interpersonal relationship, with its quality of credible potential gestures of the self, the object must be "given up." A portion of 'external reality' suddenly loses its connection with the pleasure-object principle, and becomes a "nothing," an absence invested with meaning, a fantasy, an illusion.

Like phantom limbs and the persistent conviction that the dead person lives on, illusions are the very stuff of symbolic process (Milner 1952). Any psychic apparatus organized around remembering events and objects rather than reacting to stimuli is bound to be illusionary, because this kind of active remembering is itself built on the capacity for illusion. It was with this insight that Freud turned the reflex arc into the human hungry baby. He also said that "the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object cathexes" (1923, 29). It might be argued, in line with this statement, that the self itself is structured

around illusions-- that the internal world is a hallucination constantly under threat of loss, the extinction of the internal worlds in which its own existence is projectively sustained.

The symbolic time of incipient action, or duration, and the more elaborated symbolic constitution of the self as an ongoing metaphoric process, relatively free of the immediate present, and capable of absorbing the finality of the past, imply theoretically quite different sorts of temporality, and perhaps represent different points on the developmental scale. The same goes for pain-reality and object-pleasure: the pressure for gratification (reduction of pain) and the desire to be reunited with the object (maximization of pleasure) are in principle two different kinds of psychic activity. But in practice the whole force of the psychoanalytic theory of the symbolic process depends upon the assumption (whether or not it is made explicit) that these activities, dispositions, states, levels of development, and cognitions are continually getting muddled up, and never achieve discrete status as completely differentiated functions.⁴ In fact, the claim of psychoanalysis to be a "general psychology" is based on the notion that the "universals" with which it deals-- conflict, dream, resistance to reality-- are all, from the point of view of functional differentiation, products of internal confluence (what Waelder (1936), in a valiant attempt to be scientific, called "the principle of multiple function")-- a

permanent and intractable muddle which may very well be the organic root of the hallucination of selfhood in the first place. This is what distinguishes the psychoanalytic approach from all other paradigms in the human sciences. In a completely functional psyche, there would be no need or occasion to "symbolize," but only to "represent," and representations do not need theories of the psyche in order to be understood. As Freud (1923) said: "If the ego were merely the part of the id modified by the influence of the perceptual system, the representative in the mind of the real external world, we should have a simple state of things to deal with. But there is a further complication" (28, emphasis added). The further complication to which Freud referred is the problem of internal objects, or the fact that what truly gets inside from the outside never gets there by purely cognitive means, it gets there symbolically, or by means of what the Kleinians call 'phantasy,' with a 'ph'-- i.e., illusion.

Notes to Chapter Eleven

1. The ubiquity of transference phenomena suggests that memory is often (perhaps always) active in perception. It would seem reasonable to assume, as well, that the memory function is a cognitive dimension of perception. But the sense of time does not require that memory and perception be conceived as mutually exclusive "opposites."

2. This latent motor quality which Freud ascribed to the primal activities of the psychic apparatus links the libido theory not only with Piaget's theory of sensorimotor development, in a general way, but with theories of mind advanced by phenomenologists, and with certain pragmatist thinkers like Dewey, G.H. Mead, and Kenneth Burke.

3. Bowlby (1961, 51ff.) argues that anger at the lost person is a normal and necessary phase of mourning, on the grounds that it may have a phylogenetically acquired survival function, in that it serves as a signal tending to bind the group together. The anger expresses a biological urge to recover and then scold the one who has strayed from the protective group. If this is true, then the mourner's aggressive reaction is no more pathological than the hungry infant's, even when it contradicts the cognitive reality of death. It also implies a functional link between libido and aggression, love and hate, and suggests that these "drive dispositions" are not mutually exclusive, inversely proportional opposites, but inherent muddles, equiprimordially fused. The Freudian-Kleinian-Hartmannian idea that love and hate start out as separate principles which only proper development can harmonize distracts us from the possibility that civilization, in the repressive sense of that word, may be based on their artificial separation rather than their fusion. For the sake of argument, one might even go so far as to contend that hate, rather than simply love, is what binds the group into "ever larger unities." Freud's (1920, 1930) psychomachia of libido and aggression, Eros and Thanatos, could easily be rewritten in such a way that all his examples served to demonstrate the power of love to separate the members of the species (leading inevitably to conflict), and the power of hate to unify and preserve the being of the group in harmony. Given the association of love with the higher good, this reading of Freud would imply, in the socio-political dimension, an even more radical ethics of individualism-- to the point of anarchism-- than is usually attributed to Freud.

4. Cf. Schur, 112ff; and 117: "There are no strict delineations in our mental life.... Freud's concept of a continuum is the only valid one...." The functional status of this muddle in psychoanalytic theory is exemplified by

the fact that, when subjected to conceptual analysis, the structure of defence, the structure of symptom formation, the structure of symbol formation (including so called "symbolic equations"), and the structure of sublimation, each turns out to be the same (Levin 1987a, 29-35).

CHAPTER TWELVE
THE PRIMARY PROCESS
THE TRANSITIONAL OBJECT
AND THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION

Freud's concept of the primary process was an inference about the most elemental state of the mind. Some have held that certain forms of symbolization are a direct expression of primary process thinking-- that there are some meanings and some styles which are inherent in the unformed psyche, and that these occasionally see the light of day, unmitigated by subsequent learning, acquired constraints, or civilization in general. Most, however, prefer to see the symbol as a reaction to the primary process, rather than an expression of it. In Freud's original formulation of this view (which has stood the test of time), the pure drive would eventually and inevitably confront some inhibiting force, at first a recalcitrant reality, later an internalized defence. The ensuing clash, would produce some sort of compromise, a kind of resultant of the opposing forces: at the level of psychic functioning, a differentiation, through reflex action, perception, and cognition; and at the level of semantics, the development of intrapsychic and expressive communication, through symbols, dreams, symptoms, and sublimations.

A theory of symbolization based on this drive defence model will no longer work so long as it presupposes the

unitary principle of mental origins implicit in most psychology. The semantic domain cannot be traced back to a primary state of psychic being as it might stand at the beginnings of a hypothetical development of mind from simple unity to complex variety. There is no nuclear element of the psyche to which we can appeal in the last analysis, no ultimate psychic substrate which determines all the functions of mind. (On the "doctrine of the uniformity of mind," see Chomsky [1981, 32f.])

If we think of the things that are going on 'inside' the postnatal organism as physiologically predisposed orientations, then the problem of development changes from the question of how a chaotic original state is reduced and subdivided so as to fit reality, to the question of how the psyche fits together the different aspects of reality that are available to the organism. What Freud called the primary process is just as surely one of these realities that need to be fitted together, and while there is no reason to abandon his insight that the symbolic process is bound up with the phenomena he ascribed to the primary process, it is no longer necessary to see it either as derived from them, or opposed to them. We must therefore modify, and perhaps even abandon some of the typical notions which have informed our existing models of psychological development: for example, the theory that life is a passage from insensate nature to sentient culture, from chaos to form; and the idea that the development of mind is an

epistemological exercise in the asymptotic approximation of truth or reality. Mind does not exist in singular opposition to reality; it is born in multiple interconnection with it, and is always in touch with it in some way or another, not least in the sense that mind is a goodly part of reality to begin with-- and everything that mind produces is ipso facto real.

The baby sees, hears, feels, smells, and tastes-- it perceives-- and recognizes, remembers, and infers-- it is curious, and it cognizes (i.e., knows). These capacities undergo much development as they come into their own, but they are not just the results of psychological development, and they do not develop from something else, such as drives or the algedonic conditioning of some inchoate state of unstructured sensory experience. They are what Hartmann called autonomous ego functions-- if by autonomous, we mean 'not derived from intrapsychic conflict'-- and they function coherently, if primitively, from the start of postnatal life.

Among the things that the baby is able to perceive and cognize are changes in its own body states. The latter include drives, desires, and fears. Among these, "love" and "hate" seem to be equiprimordial, as Klein more or less argued: love of the object is not a development out of primordial hatred of everything external, or a modification of 'self-love,' although it can be these as well. And hatred, in the primitive form of fearful aggression, does

not exist in the world merely because there has been a failure of love, though it exists for that reason too. Likewise, desire is not a by-product of need, or the result of a combination of need and something else, such as the "signifier." It is always there in the perceiving human animal. And anxiety, like aggression, is not merely reactive, a product of developmental failure, or the consequence of ego-formation in later infancy; like other affects, it may often be derived from an illusory ego-identification, as the Lacanians like to say; but it is not essentially that: it is a part of reality, a potentiality built into the organism, easily mobilized, and indispensable. Like desire, both fear and aggression are activated simultaneously with perception and cognition, as an inevitable complement of the environmental intelligence with which all humans are endowed. Love, hate, desire, fear, sensation, cognition, perception-- these are not learned traits, social products, illusions proper only to this veil of tears, or reactive masks for the true self: they are the materials of the symbolizing animal, and the symbolizing animal is real, even if it likes to pretend that there is yet some higher or more essential reality in which the mistakes and incompleteness which perceiving and feeling and symbolizing incur do not exist.

In addition to the perceptive, cognitive, and conative, it appears that the infant is also saddled with the affective; that is, the baby does not just want, love, hate,

and fear, in a kind of elemental fashion: it also mixes drives, perceptions, cognitions, and sensations together into modulated states of feeling which vary in intensity and tone. These are primitive emotions, and they have an essential and substantial aesthetic quality which I shall get to in a moment.

Finally, the baby imagines and fantasizes. In the lexicon of the psychology of symbolic processes, "imagination" is in a way the vaguest and emptiest of the categories we have encountered. The imagination has a contradictory status: it is both redundant and indispensable. On the one hand, the concept of the imagination, as should be clear by now, refers to nothing more than a psychic congeries of sensation, emotion, perception, cognition, drive, and the like. It could not exist in their absence, and probably cannot continue to function without drawing upon them. On the other hand, the term imagination stands for the ability, somehow inherent in the coexistence of perception, cognition, emotion, desire, and so on, to intermix: it is a kind of precondition of the psychic process.

The concept of imagination corresponds to the concept of substance, in the sense that its essential and indispensable status is precisely what renders it extraneous, redundant, ineffable: it cannot be described directly in its own terms, but only in terms of what it informs and "possibilizes." It is what 'stands under' or

subtends the dynamic interaction of the psychosomatic world, and as such, it lies apart, and beyond the reach of the observable psychesoma, even when the latter has matured and established firm integrations of function. Insofar as the imagination is the essence of mind, it is 'other' than mind (if one talks in essentialist terms): it is in fact a product of mind, an emergent property. As such, it serves, paradoxically, as a kind of "foundation" of it, the only kind of 'psychic' foundation mind is capable of having, in the same way that the secondary derivative role of the object in Freud's metapsychology has turned out to be the essence of the primitive drive itself: the only kind of basis it could have in a purely psychological frame of reference.

With sensation, perception, cognition, emotion, desire, fear, love, hate, and imagination, we should include the economics of pleasure and pain discussed above. So far, we have examined the difference between pleasure as the by-product of tension reduction, and pleasure as a motive in its own right. We have tried to situate pleasure as a motivational structure on an equal footing with the pain-reality principle: to define pleasure in terms of desire for the interactive presence of the object, and the fantasy productions which spin off from this desire, and to set this new understanding of the pleasure principle along side the primordial aim-oriented discharge economics of the pain-reality principle. In fact, as we saw in the last chapter,

the two psychosomatic orientations overlap and interfere with each other, in the same way that the moral and the practical dimensions of living constantly run together in the conscious mind.

Now we must take a third step, into a realm of experience, neither practical nor moral, which has traditionally been called the aesthetic. The state of cupidity which can be aroused by the presence of an object, the sudden awareness of a potentiality for pleasure or pain in the object which was hitherto unforeseen, can sometimes have a quality which is dependent neither on the organismic pressure for discharge or ingestion nor the intentionality of an affective relation to a specific object (though it may be accompanied and intensified by these). This state of arousal and connectedness to the object is related to what Winnicott described, in his exposition of the theory of the transitional object, as "intermediate experience."

In order to get at the most fundamental relationship between the psychic process and the aesthetic, we must reexamine again the link between pleasure and reality. But as we saw in Chapter Five, this will require some modification in our understanding of the metapsychological principles of mental functioning. We must draw the consequences from our discovery that the relationship between the primary and secondary processes is not sequential, and that it has been a mistake to conceive the primary process as the origin and the secondary process as

the end of a linear development. Rather, the origin and end of the psychic process, so far as such things exist, must be seen to lie in the transition from one to the other-- that is, in the way that the components of what we have called secondary process interact with the components of the primary process: the confluence of perceiving, calculating and reasoning on one side, with pleasure, pain, affect, sensation, desire, fantasy, dream and so on.

Let me provide a simple example. Let us imagine the combination of sensory perceptions and cognitions, such as an infant might have of the mother's breast (e.g., the perception that that is the mother's breast, which has to do with the "secondary process"), with loosely structured physical sensations, or "vitality affects" (Stern 1985), such as an infant might have of its own body (e.g., the feeling that one is about to burst, the feeling that one might be in a dream, that one may have just awakened, or just fallen asleep, the feeling that one is jerking about and disconnected, itching all over, tired, nauseous, etc.); and let us imagine these being "converted" into the dimensions of "primary process" thinking, where, for example, the infant's sensory awareness of its own physical presence is blended in with the perceptual experience (e.g., of the breast), yielding, for example, voluptuous ideas of bodily interpenetration, in which everything dissolves into the perfectly coherent flow of warm shivering substance (based on "secondary process" cognition of the

breast and coherent memories of feeding, but also perhaps of micturation while nursing); or the apprehension that the body, as a locus of sensation, will be overwhelmed by sensation, and that in the ensuing melee, the desire for the breast will turn out to have been not a desire but a perception of the breast-- and not one's own desire, but the breast's desire-- for example, the fantasy that the sight and smell and feel of the mother's breast have come to suck up the whole incompetent and inferior mess of failed personal being that the baby is beginning to experience.

The exquisiteness of naked or potentially naked bodies marooned from all but each other in intimate regression has many planes and dimensions: there is, of course, the prospect of some sort of sensual gratification, which is exciting, and galvanizes the body into a demand. This is enough in itself, but in addition, we have also been insisting on the particularity of the libidinal relation to specific objects, which runs in parallel interaction with the economics of the pain-reality principle, but is not assimilable to the latter. The libidinal relation to specific objects involves an interaction between different degrees of interiority: the relation of the internal counterpart (or 'mental representation,' in Sandler's sense) of the object to the internal world as a whole (in Klein's sense). If the internal counterpart finds or elicits a favourable ("ego syntonic") constellation of internal object relations, the prospects for pleasure are good. (This

includes variations in which the object generates an internal counterpart which bypasses, opposes or otherwise defeats some dimension of the internal world, as for example when the ego is able to ally itself with the object in releasing the id from superego constraints. Such representations can, through the process of assimilation and accomodation Piaget and Sandler describe, bring about profound modifications in the internal object world.)

Usually, considerations of pleasure have as much to do with the unpredictable distribution of ideas ("fantasy") as with the foreseeable vicissitudes of the pain-reality principle. They include everything from matrimonial states lasting a lifetime to turbulent perversions, and are related to the object in highly specific ways. For example, the dominant factor may be an investment in the overall construction of another personality, which is individual and difficult to replace, or simply the cathexis of some unique physical detail of the object unrelated to the character of the other (i.e., a variation on fetishism). But in these situations, our understanding of pleasure remains derivative, a concept defined by relations of inverse proportionality: pleasure depends on whether the instinct is discharged rather than blocked, or on whether the object is preserved, rather than destroyed.

If we are to grasp the problem of pleasure in still larger scope, we must move once more onto the plane of universality, a level of generality which actually rivals

that of the drive-discharge model of psychic functioning. On this aesthetic stratum, the quality of experience is truly regressive, and not merely reactively distorted or psychodynamically primitive. It does involve a return to simpler forms of experience, but not as a result of the crisis and collapse of a subsequent organization. Unlike the predominantly discharge situation, where fantasy is used defensively to mask the particularity of the object, and unlike the predominantly interpersonal situation, where the particularity of the object engages with the internal world, the crudely aesthetic form of pleasure seems to bypass the internal world, not for the sake of discharge, but in order to savour the details of the object itself. There is, in principle (though rarely in practice), no practicality (the drive) or morality (the object relation, as traditionally defined) here: the individuality of the object is finally irrelevant to the pleasure obtained at the aesthetic level of experience; the object is simply overwhelmed, in all its particularity, by the hypersensitive stance in which it is encountered. At the aesthetic level of experience, which subtends not only the ability to relate the self to an object, but also the supposedly more primitive capacity to define a mode of gratification for the drive, the relation to the object is sensory, cognitive, and fantastic, in a double sense: the object is experienced simultaneously as if it has been happened upon and discovered, and as if it has been imagined and created (cf., Fairbairn 1938, 1939)¹. But

in contrast to the arguments of Fairbairn and most analysts, the aesthetic moment is not a privileged derivative of the superego, or of ego-id conflict-- it is never simply projection: it exists in its purest form at the point where the natural perception of "affordances" (whether sensory, cognitive, or conative) coincides with the attribution of meaning.

The aesthetic constellation of the psyche is always a compromise of organically-based functions, no matter how crude and unbelievable, as they inevitably respond, and learn to respond, to an objective environment. The term 'affordance' (Gibson 1966) is used here to refer to the perception of a potential inherent in the self or the environment, that is, the perception that the conditions exist for a certain (any) type of action (which then becomes latent); or the perception that the conditions exist in the environment to potentiate a certain (any) type of effect on the self. Thus, for example, perceptions which take the form: 'in these circumstances, I could [fall, fall in love, slip, jump, kill, be killed],' no matter how "irrational" they may be, all have an objective component insofar as they contain an accurate or plausible detection of affordances. But there is a fine line between the perception of affordances and the attribution of meaning, and it is somewhere on or about this line that the characteristic aesthetic sense of a confluence between mental activity and the object lies.²

Pleasure is grounded in this very basic aesthetic stratum of sensation-feeling-cognition, and may be defined as function pleasure, so long as the latter is not understood as an originary closed proprioceptive system (e.g., orality-digestion-excretion) from which all other pleasures and functions derive. Function pleasure is not a singular mode of being: it necessarily encompasses an object in its circuit, and varies according to the types of interaction cathected and blended together. The fact that aesthetic pleasure is in practice always intensified by desire (or some other conative or affective disposition towards the object) is, of course, crucial to our understanding of the embryonic symbolic function. But it is misleading to hypostatize such dispositions into autonomous and originary "motive forces," and an unnecessary parsimony to interpret the aesthetic dimension and the symbolic function as epiphenomenal constructs of desire. The most "regressive" form of pleasure (not necessarily in the psychopathological, but always in the cognitive sense of regression) has the quality of an infantile phenomenology of sensory experience, a reactivation of tactile wonderment, of "coenesthetic" elation at the unveiling of the object world, the face, the breast, the hands, the own body in immediate caress. This is neither solely pleasure-in-the-breast, that is, the expectation of gratifying experience for its own sake, nor care-for-the-object, defined as an other person complementary to the self, nor the prospect of relief from

tension-- but an almost uterine ecstasy, the recovery of a passive bliss in the very act of escaping from it, a dissolution of the sensory frame in the very genesis of the duration, extension, and otherness of the object, an activation of the contingent qualities of post-natal existence in all their undetermined meaning and unlocalized intensity.

This entry into the domain of the aesthetic brings us up against a further problem in metapsychology. The problem of unconscious pleasure is rarely discussed, although it is taken for granted in the psychoanalytic literature.³ The classic example is the neurotic symptom, a compromise formation in which discharge of a repressed instinctual aim is surreptitiously achieved through symbolic displacement. Another example is the forbidden wish, particularly the wish for incestuous carnal relations. Freud once received a query about why the contents of an explicitly sexual and consciously pleasurable daydream should have become, in one reported case, so exquisitely disguised when the subject drifted into sleep and dreamt about the same fantasy (see Fliess 1953, 13-14). Freud's reply was that the anodyne fantasy contained a more dangerous wish which the dream censor had caught: the object of the daydream was in fact a substitute for the dreamer's mother. One might argue that the daydream had further aroused the instinctual pressure of the infantile incestuous wish, and that the ensuing dream work had thus been obliged to err on the side of caution,

alluding symbolically to the mother while disguising the pleasurable daydream itself, rather than risking irruption of the unconscious Oedipal wish; so the instinctual object was twice displaced in the dream.

From this kind of explanation we can draw the inference that mental contents become unconscious, not because they are pleasurable in themselves, but because they have subsequently become painful, for the most part on moral grounds, and are consequently repressed. Thus, the standard view is that mental contents become dynamically unconscious because they are repressed, and they are repressed because they are painful, or subsequently become so.

This way of dealing with the question goes a long way toward explaining why so much of the aesthetic dimension should be unconscious, since the aesthetic dimension is deeply rooted in infantile object relations, and the latter are generally at variance with public morality and social reason. But it is precisely in dealing with the question of hedonics that we should be wary of the elegance of the drive-defence model. To equate the entirety of the dynamic unconscious with the repressed would be to overlook certain crucial features of the pleasure spectrum and to limit our understanding of the role of the aesthetic dimension in the symbolizing process to its confrontation with, defeat, and marginalization by the practical (pain-reality) and moral (object) principles governing psychic life. In other words, we would be confining ourselves to an essentially

sociological conception of symbolic activity.⁴

The idea that painful thoughts, or thoughts that become painful, may be repressed-- even when one secretly likes them-- is of course indispensable, but it cannot be generalized into a law; and the same is true of its converse, the inference that psychic pain is always or even usually the result of a failure of repression. When taken too literally, the pain theory of why there is a dynamic unconscious leads to two distortions in our conception of the psyche. The first is apparent in the tendency to forget that the primary process, as Freud himself considered, is a form of mentation in its own right, with its own kind of "logic" (Ehrenzweig 1967). The unconscious is not simply a dumping site for what is cognitively or morally alien to the ego. Freud himself touched on the conceptual difficulties likely to arise from too mechanical an explanation when he pointed out that the ego itself must be counted largely unconscious in its form, methods and content. (It is not only the defensive and censoring qualities of the ego which remain out of awareness.)

The second problem with the pain theory of the unconscious is that it fosters a tendency to view primary process thinking and reality as incompatible realms of being. The chief function of the ego then becomes to contain the primary process, to prevent it from contaminating the reality function. It is assumed that it is inherent in the nature of primary process pleasure that

it become painful and unviable as soon as it makes contact with external reality. According to this way of thinking (which is by no means entirely false), the secondary process versions of pleasure must be substituted for the primary process ones, in order for any pleasure to be experienced at all, and this implies that psyche and reality are inherently antagonistic, that reality comes into awareness only at the expense of the primary process-- through the displacement of much of psychic life into the unconscious, where it can stay out of trouble.⁵

This is not a model that needs to be opposed so much as supplemented, with the following three propositions:

1) perception, i.e., sensory contact with reality, is inherently pleasurable for the organism: it is not something learned during the process of overcoming a narcissistic state of self-enclosure in which all external stimuli other than those which gratify the drive are experienced as painful or chaotic impingements (cf. Buhler, 1959).

2) as we saw in Chapter One, perception is not the exclusive province of consciousness, or what Freud called the "pcpt.-cs. system." The primary process is perfectly capable of sensory contact with reality, and is itself a part of that reality. In other words, there is unconscious perception, and this perception is valid in its own right. The primary process is not ontologically exiled from reality, and it is not necessarily painful-- it is just

unconscious.⁶

3) Granted that a sort of secondary process develops under the pressure of "reality," it follows from 1) and 2) that the latter development does not actually introduce reality to the body for the first time, in opposition to a primary form of mentation inherently divorced from reality; the secondary process rather narrows the focus on reality down, or in other words, defines it, and it does this for limited purposes, the practical ones that Freud emphasized, and the moral ones that Klein elucidated. These purposes are generally met to the extent that the environment requires them, but they are not, by themselves, the only conditions of psychic survival, because the connection with reality depends on the primary process as well.

Winnicott was one of the first to spell this last point out in some detail. Freud had emphasized the importance of learning, by means of the secondary process, to find sources of pleasure in the real external world. The Freudian infant has imposed upon it the necessity of decathecting the hallucinated breast, in order to use it instead as a practical guide (memory trace) in the search for the real breast. Winnicott was interested in establishing the preconditions of this capacity to take pleasure in the world. But in so doing, he subtly altered the metapsychological frame of reference within which the concept of pleasure was understood. Rather than dwelling on

the child's developmental task of overcoming the omnipotent belief that the imaginary, self-produced breast within can satisfy the instinct, Winnicott chose to consider what might be the maturational function of the belief itself. In effect, he proposed that it is precisely the infant's hallucinatory "identity of perception" (where the remembered breast is experienced as the real breast) which establishes a libidinal bond with the environment. (One thinks, in this context, of Erikson's concept of "basic trust.") Winnicott reasoned, as did Freud, that the instinctual production of a fantasied breast (i.e., the regression of Freud's hungry baby) must in actuality frequently coincide with the presentation of the real breast. The idea he drew from this was that the coincidence of imagination and reality during the caretaker's ministrations defines a specific type of developmental experience, a kind of "area of illusion;" and he argued that it is through this privileged kind of experience-- the opportunity to tarry unchallenged in the area of illusion-- that the baby is able, by degrees, to transform its narcissism into a creative, object-related orientation to the environment. Moreover, he hypothesized that if this area of illusion is too frequently challenged or too early shattered, the affirmative link to reality will be endangered, and perception will tend to be experienced more as a painful impingement than as a joyful gathering in.

(To elaborate just a little on Winnicott here: there are two kinds of challenge to the area of illusion, a

factual one, and an emotional one. The factual challenge arises when perception contradicts expectation. The emotional challenge arises from a demand of the object regarding the logical status of our illusions. But this is not just a problem for babies, as Winnicott himself recognized. There is no time in life when the arrangements we have made for living and being with others are invulnerable to such challenges, particularly the emotional challenge, and thus, in a sense, we never take leave of the area of illusion which Winnicott ascribed to the infant as a stage of development. What changes is not the type but the quantity of cognitive elaboration; and not the nature but the subtlety of our defences. In psychological development, both will increase and refine substantially, but their purpose-- to establish and safeguard an illusory "potential" space within which our personhood can flourish-- remains the same as it was in infancy.)

Optimally, the well-satisfied infant in Winnicott's theory begins to emerge from the symbiotic holding environment with a cogent fantasy of what it wants. This fantasy is not just an example of unbridled narcissistic mania: it implies an inchoate differentiation from the self, in the form of a demand on the external world which is not quite met, and indeed, in the furthest reaches of conception, might not be met, but which (as Freud (1912) so vividly described in Totem and Taboo) the infant nevertheless expects to control and to satisfy, if only

through personal magic, the charisma of the wish itself. At this point, according to Winnicott, "The mother's love and her close identification with her infant make her aware of the infant's needs to the extent that she provides something more or less in the right place at the right time. This, much repeated, starts off the infant's ability to use illusion, without which no contact is possible between the psyche and the environment" (1958, 223). As Susan Deri (1984) has commented, "Frustration may teach a child to perceive and adapt to reality, but only the experience of fulfillment, coming from the outside but magically "created" by the infant's wish, will lead to love of reality" (251).

Although it is grounded in roughly the same premise regarding early cognition as Freud's hungry baby, the emotional situation Winnicott ascribes to the desiring and hallucinating infant in an "average expectable environment" needs to be distinguished from Freud's image of the "purified pleasure ego," where all unpleasure is projected away from the self, and the "first relationship to the object is one of hate." Whereas for Freud (and for Klein after him) the notion of a "bad external reality" was a natural and logical feature of psychological development--an obvious corollary of narcissism and the pain principle--Winnicott treated the pleasure ego and Klein's "paranoid-schizoid position" as largely reactive and unnatural postures: they were not so much inevitable developments as contingent consequences of mothering which had not been

"good enough" to sustain the necessary illusion of narcissism by minimizing the trauma of 'impingement'. Winnicott was not as concerned as most psychoanalysts and developmental psychologists with the enormous cognitive gulf separating infant states of mind from the consciousness of the adult. What interested him more was the need and the "tendency on the part of the infant to weave other-than-me objects into the personal pattern" (1971, 3). For Winnicott, narcissism was not an epistemologically deficient stage of psychic life to be overcome and suppressed, but an emotional truth to be nurtured and cultured into confident personhood.⁷

Winnicott tended to view the conflicts of later childhood as complications tangential to the central issues of psychological development, which have to do with emotional orientation to reality and the balance between the internal and external configurations of experience. Without the illusion of "omnipotence" (rendered a temporary success by "good-enough mothering"), Winnicott's infant cannot begin to accept actively the reality of the unforeseen, the unintended consequences of the world, both inside and outside. The resulting psychosexual effects of such emotional deprivation were for him secondary to the fact that sensory contact itself (i.e., the relation with being beyond the tentative boundaries of the organism, including its physiologically determined maturation and development) has become tainted by a persecutory sense of impingement

(what Nietzsche would have called 'ressentiment'); reality is thus accepted only in a passive or reactive manner issuing in what Winnicott labelled the "false self," a way of living in which secondary process articulation is likely to become a defensive construct, and self-expression tends to be limited to crisis periods of pending annihilation, when the shield of negativity defending the inarticulate core of the threatened psychesoma fails.

Notes to Chapter Twelve

1. Fairbairn's contribution to psychoanalytic aesthetics in the late nineteen thirties probably influenced Winnicott's formulation of the concept of "transitional object" (1952). In his discussion of the surrealist 'found' object as "a minimal work of art," Fairbairn emphasized the confluence of 'discovery' and 'creation' as "a union between the world of outer reality and the inner world of the dream" (1939, 170).

2. Cf. Walker-Evans (1988), who has used the concept of affordances as a guiding concept for the experimental study of the perception of face, voice, gesture, and affect in early infancy.

3. Marion Milner (1956, 181): "The popular view of the Freudian concept of the unconscious is that it contains only the bad things, the hates and lustfulness that we do not like to admit to ourselves. But any practicing analyst knows also how strong is the repression of love." And we might add: the repression of pleasure and pleasure-seeking as well-- as Milner (1955) demonstrates.

4. As can be seen in the work of Freud, Klein, and Jung, the repression model of the dynamic unconscious tended to encourage the counterbalancing postulate that certain inexplicable features of the unconscious must therefore be explained phylogenetically: that is, it led to the hypothesis that the unconscious must also have archetypal or Lamarckian traits-- racial or species memories, universal symbols, and the like. (For a discussion of this problem as it relates to 'symbolism', see Forrester 1980, 63-130). Thus, in his later writings, Freud generally held that the unconscious has two main tiers: the surface layer consists of those elements which are repressed because they are

painful to the individual (a kind of social unconscious), and the deeper layer consists of those elements which are repressed because they are painful to the species (a kind of racial unconscious).

5. These assumptions dovetail with the belief that there was once a time when the psychic apparatus was governed exclusively by the pain principle, consisting entirely of primary process type mentation, and that all other activities of the psyche are elaborations of this simple motivational structure. If this stance were consistently adopted, then it would be possible to argue that unconscious mentation is exclusively the result of repression, that all primary process was at one time unrestricted (and possibly conscious), and that perceptions, cognitions, sensations, and memories only become unconscious and only carry psychic weight if they become prohibited or associated with painful ideas and experiences-- in short, excluded by the emerging reality principle from involvement with the secondary process.

6. Compare the following very interesting statement by Freud (1940[1938], 198): "The id, cut off from the external world, has a world of perception of its own. It detects with extraordinary acuteness certain changes in its interior, especially oscillations in the tension of its instinctual needs, and these changes become conscious as feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series. It is hard to say, to be sure, by what means and with the help of what sensory terminal organs these perceptions comes about. But it is an established fact that self-perceptions-- coenaesthetic feelings and feelings of pleasure-unpleasure-- govern the passage of events in the id with despotic force [*italics added*]."

7. See also Grunberger (1971), where narcissism has more the character of a psychic agency than a stage of development or a state of mind; and Kohut (1971), for whom narcissism constitutes a separate line of development distinct from the drives.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE INTERMEDIATE PROCESS

The argument has brought us to the celebrated topic of Winnicott's theory of the transitional object. As we saw in Chapter Seven, the object in Winnicott's estimation initially lacks articulation: it is indistinguishable from the infant's gross experience, the affecto-motor configurations which automatically and without signification express the organism's actual state of regulatory balance within the environment provided. This is a depiction of the body in raw states of pleasure and pain, security and danger. At one extreme, environmental neglect tends toward psychosomatic extinction (as Spitz [1945, 1965] demonstrated); at the other, the holding environment promotes a kind of organismic confidence in omnipotent 'self'-sufficiency. The latter was what Winnicott took to be the natural state of the self at its inception, and the theory of the transitional object was, as the term itself suggests, a theory about the way in which this confident sense of sufficiency is gradually modified so as to accomodate the existence of an object world which is separate from the self, and ultimately beyond its emotional control.

The inchoate objectal dimension of the primitive infantile self, submerged as it is in the cognitive oblivion of the holding environment, first appears in the form of the

infant's subtle variations, difficult to observe, of the nursing situation and of straightforward autoerotic stimulation. The thumb is sucked, but the corner of a blanket is manipulated simultaneously with the fingers of the same hand, or partly mouthed along with the thumb; the infant plays with the breast as it feeds; or the fingers caress the face, as the mouth sucks on the thumb. As Winnicott (1971, 4) explains, "the mouth is then active in relation to the thumb, but not in relation to the fingers. The fingers caressing the upper lip, or some other part, may be or may become more important than the thumb engaging the mouth." Or, as Kestenberg and Weinstein (1978) put it,

The transitional object...is rarely used for distraction from pain, as are other things and activities employed in the primitive defense of displacement from pain to pleasurable experiences. Neither is the transitional object a prime soother like the breast and thumb or a secondary soother like the bottle and the pacifier. These are all providers of direct drive satisfaction through the maintenance of regular rhythmic activity in the oral zone. The transitional object serves as an adjunct to a defense or a drive.... It becomes... useless when drive discharge is hindered, because it can no longer function as a bridge... (77-8).

The transitional phenomena which Winnicott and Kestenberg describe have an indirect relation to the pain-reality principle in the sense that although they depend upon drive satisfaction as a general precondition, their meaning is independent of physiological need. The 'adjunct' playfulness which emerges is not just a means of coping with

the drive, but an exploration beyond it. There is always some sort of attempt, however limited by sensorimotor development, to elaborate a significant object, to imagine and explore a relationship.

The transitional object-- in the loose sense of a phenomenon-- also has only an indirect relationship to perception and cognition. For Winnicott, the object of the infant's preoccupation by no means requires that there be an observable entity for the infant, even when there is one for the adult. Nor does the infant have to 'know' the object, in the way that it knows, for example, the breast. The relationship between transitional phenomena and the objects of drives, perceptions, and cognitions is comparable to the relationship between the psyche and the 'organs' or 'faculties' of the mind, or between the dream and the patterns of interference of brain activity during REM sleep -- it is an emergent process, that is, an 'effect', or even an 'illusion,' but one with an organization or logic entirely its own.

Winnicott stressed that a transitional phenomenon is never, for the infant, entirely an experience of otherness, although the infant is beginning to discover the concept of 'not-self' through it. In the same way, he suggested that although the transitional object may be an observable entity for the adult, it also defines a point at which the adult, in complementarity with the infant, can meet the child in the area of illusion, and this, again, need not be located

in a specific possession which the baby handles: what is important is that the boundary between the self and the other, the subject and the object, is blurred; and the question of competing systems of causality and intention is suspended. So that while the transitional object is really the first psychic representative of pleasure in the dimension of the not-self, its otherly quality is accepted initially only on condition that it remain the self's creation, that it be permitted to wallow within the range of the infant's flux of mood and wish, and to cease to exist when interest subsides, or when the infant regresses to the need for a more perfect coincidence of fantasy and reality in the mother's actual presentation of the breast.

When elaborated in the context of an interpersonal interaction, transitional forms of experience necessarily involve a paradox: that the object is both 'me' and 'not me,' an "identity of perception" and an external reality, a wish-fulfillment and a displacement of the wish onto a substitute object. Winnicott insisted that this paradox is a psychologically vital one, not only for the infant but for the adult as well-- a paradox not to be resolved by recourse to "split-off intellectual functioning" (1971, xii). In fact, it is no more a paradox than the tendency, remarked in the last chapter, for the perception of affordances to slide over into the attribution of meanings. Winnicott's point was that the (logically) contradictory and illusional essence of the infantile encounter with the world is

sustained, through developments originating in the transitional area of experiencing, in all forms of play and erotic union, in culture generally and art (112-121). But it is also critical to the formation of libidinal links to the "material environment" (i.e., what is in our culture so often isolated from the rest of our experience, and designated as "reality"). This suggests something fundamental about the psychic process which we have been advocating all along: that 'meaning' is never merely a sublimation of the drive operating according to the pain-reality principle; it is derived as well from an aesthetic mode of apprehension; it is a transformation not only of the relation to an object, but of the proprioceptive relation to the body itself, as this is channelled through the object world.

And it suggests something further which has only been hinted at-- namely that, in contrast to the arguments of Freud and Klein, the processes involved in generating and consolidating an internal world are pleasurable in themselves. As we saw in Chapter Five: when and if the hungry baby hallucinates the experience of gratification, it is not necessarily regressing to the primitive id; it is learning to establish and use intermodal relationships-- crudely speaking, to bring the primary and secondary processes together-- in order to think about the situation it is in, to symbolize a state of the body, and to create a kind of vision.

Most psychoanalysts would agree that neither the primary nor the secondary process may fairly be conceived as a homogeneous unit. All psychological activities are essentially multiple in character, and I have argued that it is by virtue of this diversity of sources that psychic processes of any kind are necessarily symbolic-- expressive, communicative, and meaningful virtually by definition. Something has to be related to something else, and not just one thing with another: something internal has to be related to something else internal, something external has to be related to something else external, and more than one internal thing has to be related to more than one external thing. The phenomenon of 'mind' cannot be grasped as the developmental unfolding of a single nucleus or principle, and is not intelligible when considered in isolation from its emergent semantic properties (cf. Oatley 1978).

Nevertheless, many psychoanalytic theoreticians have adduced the fragmentary nature of infant experience as prima facie evidence of the predominance of pain, discomfort, frustration, and anxiety in early life. Klein described the disintegrating effects of paranoid-schizoid defence structures and Lacan referred to the corps morcele, from which helpless state the infant gratefully tries to escape through identification with the false image of an integrated whole-- the phallic object of the mother's desire.

Winnicott (1962) introduced a useful distinction between unintegration and disintegration (61). If--

departing from Winnicott somewhat-- we can accept that the infant body has an internal world, a region of experience mediated by self and object perception, then we ought to expect that it must be constantly translating one type of experience into another. Hallucinating, fantasizing, and dreaming, however unrealistic, however dominated by the imperious wish, however driven by the avoidance of pain, all depend upon the capacity to relate sensation to cognition, and to let the body come together and fall apart again in ceaseless reconfigurations. The plasticity and divisibility of the psychesoma in general are preconditions of mental activity. As we saw in Chapter One, terms such as 'integration' and 'unintegration' are really abstractions referring to the hypothetical functional limits of ordinary psychosomatic rhythm: they denote neither wholeness nor disintegration in themselves. Thinking is a diverse interaction of translations, which would be impossible if the body were not always potentially unintegrated. But if this is so, then thinking has to be a pleasure before it can be a pain. Its object has to be loved by the senses before it can be devoured and incorporated in an oral panic; and the unplanned functioning of the body has to be treasured, offered to the world, before it can be denied, projected outwards in terrorized flight from the uncertainty of experience.

I am suggesting that psychodynamics must first be understood as multiple, reciprocal interaction, in which

many parts, capacities, and functions jointly condition one another and collectively fashion the overall pattern Freud called psyche. Parts of this pattern normally achieve relative stability, while others do not, and certain functions come to be grouped together to form such entities as ego and superego. But even the sustained psychic formations remain volatile processes requiring periodic unintegration and redefinition. As we saw in Chapter One, the aesthetic law of the psyche may be conceived in terms of the differentiation of figure and ground, a kind of anti-Gestalt, or perpetual violation of the principles of good form (Ehrenzweig 1967). This is not the absence of perception, as so many developmentalists argue, but the presence of that which escapes dichotomization and hierarchization into figure and ground-- in short, that which escapes defensive splitting. Now, if I am right in saying that psychodynamics must first be understood as joint action before it can be reduced to conflict between what is supposed to be primary and what is supposed to be derived from it-- if the object is already perceived and enjoyed before the organism has had a chance to recoil from pain; if the external world is fundamentally accepted before it can be turned into a practical alternative to the internal world; if reality is not just a construction designed to supplement the intellectual poverty of the drive-- then it follows that the first meaning of the term 'dynamic' has to be an aesthetic one; and, as I have been arguing, the

'aesthetic' has to be understood as being somehow connected to the pleasure of body functioning in relation to objects.

We can illustrate this by returning briefly to the problem with which this treatise opened, the puzzle of psychic defence. Splitting, projection, identification, repression, displacement, condensation, and the like, are all frequently cited as typical examples of primitive, primary process thinking. On the other hand, all these supposedly irrational mechanisms, including displacement and condensation, have been described as straightforward forms of ego defence. So which is it to be: primary process or secondary process, id or ego? The confusion seems to lie in our failure to theorize the aesthetic substratum of psychic process. Splitting, for example, surely presupposes perceptual and cognitive discrimination; it cannot be the unconscious origin of differential thinking, but one of the symbolic elaborations of it. The capacity to split, to safeguard the desirable by dividing it from the undesirable, rests on the capacity to recognize differences, which is a pleasure in itself, as experiments based on stimulus habituation demonstrate over and over again. The secondary defence against a primary process activity is always a product of symbolic activities already in place; and from this, it seems, we are forced to conclude that the primary and the secondary processes are themselves derived and elaborated from some other kind of psychosomatic activity. We may go so far as to say that the so called 'laws' of

unconscious mentation, condensation, displacement, the mobility of cathexes, and the suspension of the laws of time, space, and contradiction are all forms of symbolization: they presuppose the whole psychic apparatus, including perception, cognition, memory, differentiation, deferral, and the ego itself: nothing can take place in the psyche, nothing in the mind can be dynamic, unless it is already caught up in a symbolic elaboration.

In metapsychological terms, the paradox whose resolution Winnicott refused has to do with the notion, which Freud did not entertain, that the primary process-- in all its violation of the assumptions of consciousness-- nevertheless requires an object other than itself in order to function, and not just any object that happens to serve the aim of the instinct for gratification, but a specific object whose identity must be respected, even if it is not, in itself, an observable entity. The pleasure principle (in whatever new sense this phrase has acquired in the wake of our analysis of the pain-reality principle) cannot thrive without the tension inherent in the possibility of otherness, even if the latter establishes a horizon of ultimate oblivion-- of potential fusion on the one hand, or barren separation on the other. There is no pleasure without the object; but the object of pleasure, the transitional object, must in some sense be created in order for it to be real-- its meaning must be endowed. This was Winnicott's message. The psyche cannot strive for pleasure

or against pain without looking for, and somehow finding, a way of localizing and controlling meaning. So Winnicott's paradox is not only about the fact that the transitional object is neither one thing nor another, neither me nor not me; it arises also from the fact that the symbolic or semantic function, which is supposed to emerge from the foundations of the 'reflex arc' (primary process), in order then to develop epigenetically from the later discovery of the object as a separate being (secondary process), is actually presupposed by both of these metapsychological foundations: the symbolic function is the primum mobile of the pain-reality apparatus, and the 'existential ground' of the object's independent reality.

Freud's metapsychology implies a vision of life as a progressive effort of substitution, in which prohibited objects and aims are exchanged for permissible ones. He elaborated this view in terms of the practical quest for libidinal satisfaction, the resolution of drive tension; and Klein continued the argument in terms of the moral quest for psychic peace, appeasement of object hunger and defeat of anxiety. Winnicott did not openly contradict these views, but he emphasized the idea, implicit in both Freud and Klein, that the objects of pleasure actually found are not necessarily just simple displacements of earlier, no longer viable objects (such as the nursing mother), linked only by relations of contiguity and similarity; but potentially also developments and transformations of these primitive objects.

For Winnicott, if only indirectly, development implies also the "discovery" or "creation" of new objects-- aspects of 'self' and 'reality' which never existed before and which are not reducible to some process of refinding (Freud 1905, 22; 1925, 237), repetition (Freud, 1920), or substitution (Lacan 1966; Derrida 1972b, 63-173).

As his use of the terms "transitional" and "potential" suggests, Winnicott saw the substitution of the secondary for the primary process as itself an important process, and it was here that he really made the most of the concept of "creative illusion." In fact, for Winnicott, the transitional object, though soon given up by the baby, and forgotten in its manifest guise as a teddy bear or the chewed corner of a blanket, does not represent a passing phase in psychological life, as we have already seen. The area of creative illusion and the properties of transitional phenomena retain their significance throughout the history of the psyche, both as permanent acquisitions and as indispensable points of creative regression and psychological renewal. Winnicott (1971, 3) described the 'potential space' of the 'transitional object' as an "intermediate" area of experience, "the third part of the life of a human being... to which inner reality and external life both contribute." This idea was presented as a kind of rounding out of "the usual statement of human nature," which in classical psychoanalytic theory involved a sharp contrast between the infant mind and the adult mind (Jones 1916):

between internal, "instinctual" reality, and external, "objective" reality. I think it would conform to the spirit of Winnicott's speculations to propose, as a supplement to Freud's formulation of the modes of psychic functioning-- that is, in addition to the primary and secondary processes -- a third perspective: the concept of an intermediate process (cf. Green 1972).

Winnicott's views imply that the transition from primary to secondary process thinking must be viewed not only in the framework of a developmental sequence, but as itself an ongoing mode of thinking which constitutes the active nucleus of the psyche and sustains it. Unfortunately, those interpretations of Winnicott which have not foundered in socio-cultural or religious generalization have confined themselves to the sequential-developmental perspective, depicting the transitional object and related phenomena as transitional only in time. This approach has had the intellectual advantage of reducing the ambiguity and untidiness of Winnicott's thinking; but the resulting aura of respectability has been bought at the price of a pseudo-scientific rhetoric of observational induction and diagnosis which has little clinical meaning, and wouldn't pass muster in an infant research laboratory either: first there is primary narcissism, then there is the transitional object, then there are true object-representations and secondary process. Winnicott himself argued that the appearance of the transitional object at the end of the first year

represents a shift from more primitive to more developed modes of thinking. Limiting themselves to this line of reasoning, Spitz and Metcalf (1978) have suggested (on the analogy of embryological development) that the transitional object is a "psychic organizer," like the social smile or the 'no,' whose function is limited to a specific developmental stage (Spitz 1957); and Isaacs Elmhirst (1980) has argued that the stage-specific, developmental meaning of Winnicott's concept must be reemphasized. She contends that "transitional object formation can begin as early as 2 1/2 months-old and is seldom normally initiated after the first birthday" (367). She recommends that the use of Winnicott's theory be restricted to the observation of situations in which the transitional object itself appears in early life.

In the alternative model we have been developing here, the transitional object, as conventionally understood, is an early manifestation of the general negotiating activity which regulates the relationship between primary and secondary process forms of thinking: in effect, it is an experimentation with the coexistence of the inside and the outside (their different levels of being within the psyche and projection beyond it). We know that the primary and secondary processes never function in a completely autonomous way, unrelated to each other; and the transitional object is itself one example of this. What caught Winnicott's attention was not so much the existence of certain habitual infantile possessions, but a question

about their meaning. He emphasized the bridging function of the transitional object, but not just in the abstract temporal sense of spanning one stage and the next of development. For Winnicott, the secondary process does not just arise; it arises in a particular way. And because it emerges in the intermediate area of experiencing, it is never just an intact ego function following in sequence from the primary process, but a quality or character arising simultaneously through the joint action (or what Fekete [1977, 223, n.12] calls "commotion") of mental functions.

If we read a little bit between the lines, we can see that for Winnicott the secondary process could be an opening onto the world, or a defensive shell-- but not a developmental task in and of itself. He wanted to understand why perception might be a pleasure or a pain, and why cognition might be expressive or defensive in its basic orientation. I am interpreting this shift in emphasis so as to accomodate a new perspective which Winnicott did not actually share: namely, that the secondary process as a function is always already in place in embryonic form-- it is as primary in terms of individual development as the primary process itself. It follows that the psychodynamic issue, even for clinicians, is not the presence or absence of the secondary process per se-- not the question of whether or not a secondary process has ever emerged in the psychic history of the individual-- but rather the question of its character and fate. This is the dimension of the ego

which depends upon the "intermediate process:" it has to do with the way in which crude proprioception and simple objective perception, primitive conation and rudimentary cognition, thinking and acting, inside and outside, etc., have all come to be translated back and forth into one another: that is the symbolic process.

Winnicott opened the way to discussing the fate of the secondary process in the same general way that psychoanalysis has always discussed the fate of the primary process-- namely, as an inquiry into the history of an 'organ' interacting with other organs, or the environment. After all, one does not usually have to ask of a perinatal organism whether or not it has a liver; instead one accepts the existence of the liver and refrains from speculating about what it may be secondary to in terms of physiological evolution, in order to concentrate on its actual history in relation to the rest of the body. Cases of congenital malfunctioning are never taken as proof that the liver is a precarious outpost of the physiological system, a later development liable to revert to the form of some more primary organ. The same can be said for the secondary process. The secondary process is an evolutionary development-- it exists in all mammals to some extent. But we do not try to determine its specific character, in the clinical setting, from the point of view of a phylogenetic model of its development-- we are interested in the ontogeny of perception, cognition, feeling, and reasoning, the way in

which they have developed personally once they have been established phylogenetically. This means that we have to bracket the problem of how the secondary process may have emerged from the primary process in prehistory, which is a hypothetical question for theoretical biologists of the mind; we wonder instead about the way in which the two interact. From the point of view of symbolization, we recognize and respect the fact that the secondary process is a late development in the history of living organisms; but so may be the primary process: we do not base our ontogenetic theory of perception and cognition on some formula according to which ontogeny should always be interpreted as a recapitulation of phylogeny.

This means that we have to resist the temptation to confuse symbolization with the secondary process itself. We accept increased environmental intelligence as an evolutionary fact and as a (pre)condition of symbolization, but then go on to ask what it is in particular about symbolization that determines its symbolic character-- what it is about psyche that gives it its psychic meaning-- and we cannot settle the answer to these questions by extrapolating from evolutionary sequences and projecting them onto the infant. Instead, we have to focus as well as we can on the vicissitudes of ontogeny itself by looking at the ways in which the phylogenetically given ingredients of the psyche respond to each other in a particular organism. In other words, if we want to pin down what it is that is

psychic about the psyche and what it is that is symbolic about symbolization, we have to give some primacy to the intermediate process, even though the intermediate process is logically secondary to and dependent on drive, affect, perception, and cognition-- an emergent property of mind parts.

The transitional object is usually written up as a proto-symbol-- the first indication that psychic process is beginning to reach beyond the vegetative self-enclosure of the infantile body. There is no doubt a great deal of truth in this perspective. But in the present account, the transitional object (in the literal sense of the more or less observable psychomotor manipulation of a treasured possession) may also be understood as a first step beyond the symbolic process, a very early attempt to reach outside of the psychic process itself. On this view, the transitional object would appear to be a very primitive mutation of the archaic forms of meaning, which have to do with the body interacting with itself in relation to an object. If this is so, then the development of the "first not-me possession" is not so much a hint in the direction of symbolization-- as if the latter were still somewhere out of reach; it is a movement towards the capacity for signification, in which references to the body and the object will eventually be minimized to the greatest possible extent, in favour of autonomous systems of reference, manipulation, and control (see Chapter Nine)-- or what

Derrida would call "writing." When the transitional object is seen from the traditional developmentalist perspective as a case of 'not-yet' meaning, it is of course being interpreted as a precursor of psychic organization and as a guage of emerging object differentiation; but when seen as a development away from the primary semantic matrix of the psyche, as we are doing here, the transitional object may be understood as a very early foreshadowing of the kind of thinking which will one day include the use of language as the dominant means of communication. If this scenario can be accepted, then it becomes just as plausible to understand the transitional object as a displacement of the aesthetic dimension as it is to argue, together with Winnicott, that it is the origin of aesthetic experience. In other words, the transitional object can be read simultaneously as a cognitive reorganization of the psyche around the object on the one hand; or as the relativization of a psychic orientation already structured by the aesthetic apprehension of the object. The first view appeals to the fact that the object has yet to be experienced in all its dimensions. The second involves a speculation arising from the possibility that aesthetic experience-- perception-cognition-affect-- precedes the capacity for practical and moral action. It views the empirical transitional object stage as a reflection of the influence of specific practical and moral demands placed on the psyche toward the end of the first year by i) the accumulation of experience and information;

ii) the growth of motor coordination (which has been lagging behind the rest of the psyche for nearly a year [see Chapter Six]); iii) increasing pressure from the social environment, which is normally timed with i) and ii); and possibly iv) the gradually maturing verbi-vocal apparatus.

Unfortunately, Winnicott's view of the object-relation (as a creative adaptation of hallucinatory experience) is easily absorbed by the linguistic-culturalist approach to symbolization which dominates current academic thinking, and according to which perception of the object world is a subjective development out of organic nonperception, and reality is an artifactual product of psychosocial conditioning. To the extent that Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomena seems to make simple perception of the object dependent on the passage through a developmental stage of illusion, the influence of his work can serve as much to obfuscate the symbolic process as to illuminate it. But we know that the relationship with the world beyond the body is not something that the psyche, in a struggle against the body, creates out of nothing, in the way that idealist epistemologies "produce" the world from the structures of mind; bodily experience is always simultaneously world experience, and the tension which arises out of the ongoing differentiation of proprioception and perception, or what Polanyi called subsidiary and focal awareness, is something that the psyche is obliged to negotiate at all stages of development. It is not the cognitive separation of the

subject from the object which arises from the transitional states Winnicott described: the object is not the developmental by product of good creative illusions-- the psyche itself is. Rather than confining ourselves to the task of filling out the details of an old story about how the child is weaned from insensate self-absorption, we need to shift our perspective, so that we can begin to explore the possibility that transitional phenomena are somehow related to the problem of establishing a supramodal constellation of experience. in which perception, cognition, feeling, and drive are gradually brought together (rather than separated out), and harmonized with increasing cortical control over the body and its movements: in short, we need to start with the concept of "personhood" and work forward, rather than backward; or to state this in a slightly more acceptable way, we should at least try to look for a way to take the illusion of the psyche seriously as an organismic fact--as a contribution toward rather than merely an epiphenomenal effect of or a dualistic transcendence of "material" processes.

On the basis of the phylogeny-ontogeny analogy, which still dominates psychoanalytic theorizing, Winnicott assumed that the secondary process was a late development; if he had known otherwise, he presumably would not have made the same mistake as Piaget did when he equated the disappearance of place error in sensorimotor stages five and six with object constancy; he would have seen the literal transitional

object as one of the first coherent motor expressions of a congenital psychic activity, and would thus have had no need to postulate that the infant is unable to perceive the mother as a separate object in order to account for the ambiguous status of the object in relation to the always emerging self. But if Winnicott's cognitive-developmental assumptions about primary narcissism are stripped away (or reinterpreted as a kind of plausible rhetoric of intrauterine psychic states, which need not concern us here), then what Winnicott gives us is an adumbration of psychic life as a process originating in the intermediate area of experiencing, where sensation, perception, cognition, emotion, and drive play intermodally and aesthetically; in other words, he gives us a theory of mind that is organized around the concept of "imagination"-- or the "substance of illusion" (Winnicott 1971, 3). As indicated near the beginning of this essay, arguments along these lines take us all the way back to the romantic philosophers and poets, and to Schiller's notion of mind's existence in the world as a peculiar sort of conjoint action; but they do not refute the more recently established psychological and developmental perspectives on symbolization based on the urgency of the practical claims made by the type of reality that evolves from the pressure of need; nor do they avoid-- on the contrary, they invite-- consideration of the moral claims derived from fear for the self and concern for the object. Speculations about

emergent processes and properties, transitional objects and intermediate areas of experience, do not discontinue the professionally established lines of psychological description and explanation. At most, they make the concept of the reflex seem as imprecise as the concept of spirit when it comes to discussions of what we still call mind. But the new perspective we have been sketching cannot begin exclusively with any one such specialized relationship to the world as need, desire, love, hate, or fear. There is no a priori reason why the concept of the psyche as an intermediate process cannot include all of these-- together with knee-jerk reactions and other-wordly incarnations-- as organically grounded variations on the psychically more fundamental aesthetic stratum of experience, in which the process of symbolization is somehow embodied as a causal effect-- as (perhaps only) one of the psychological substances or physical essences of the thinking activity which we actually do know is going on in the world where we really do live.

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